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SPENSER'S POEM,

ENTITLED

COLIN CLOUTS COME HOME AGAINE,

EXPLAINED;

WITH REMARKS UPON

THE AMORETTI SONNETS,

AND ALSO UPON

*A FEW OF THE MINOR POEMS OF OTHER EARLY
ENGLISH POETS.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"REMARKS ON THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE," TO WHICH
THIS VOLUME IS DESIGNED AS A COMPANION.

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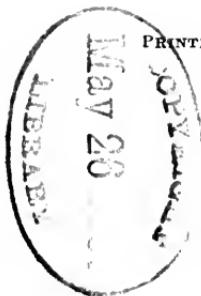
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ADVERTISEMENT.

Remarks upon the Amoretti (or Sonnets) of Spenser will be found in the 2d and 3d chapters of this volume; and the Sonnets themselves, for the convenience of the student, have been added to the volume.

The reader of the author's Remarks on the Shakespeare Sonnets, will find here some striking confirmations of the views there presented; but may discover many more by studying the early English poets in view of several pregnant hints in the Notes of Robert Bell, in his valuable edition of Chaucer's poetical works (London, 1862), particularly the note, vol. 4, page 201 on the following lines in the poem entitled the Assembly of Foules [or Birds] —where the curious reader may see the very Queen, the mystical Lady of so many poets.

"When I was comen ayen [again] into the *place* [?]
That I of spake, that was so soote [sweet] and greene,
Forth walked I tho [then] my selven to solace:
Tho [then] was I ware [aware], where there sate a QUEENE, [N. B.]
That, as of light the sommer Sunne shene
Passesthe sterre, [stars], right so over mesure, [or, beyond measure,]
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a launde, [lawn], upon a hill of flowers,
Was sette THIS NOBLE GODDESSE NATURE.

NOTE, BY MR. BELL.

The reader will remark the close resemblance between the structure of this poem [the Assembly of Foules—or Birds—] and that of the Court of Love, already pointed out in the introduction to the latter poem. In these and in many detached passages of Chaucer's other poems, may be detected A TENDENCY TO PANTHEISM, or the worshipping a principle supposed to pervade the Universe, rather than a personal Deity.

Some of the poets see this principle as Lady Nature, their mistress.



CHAPTER I.

HUME tells us, in the brief critical notices of literary works at successive periods embraced in his history, that Spenser's FAERIE QUEENE was a work which every scholar, or man of pretension to literary taste, felt bound to have upon his table; but he adds, that no one felt bound to read it. Whether this criticism, or what, has worked the change we cannot say, but it is quite certain that the once famous allegory of Una and the Lamb is no longer, or but rarely, seen upon the scholar's desk, and is only seen upon the parlor centre-table when richly bound in gilt and illustrated with pictures for the eye, while the book itself is as little read now as it was in the days of David Hume.

That the cold and self-complacent philosophical historian should care but little about the "idle fancies," as he no doubt reputed them, of such a man as Spenser, may not be surprising to those of

his own temper ; but there are others who will be apt to say, after all, that his criticism may be considered as indicating only his own taste, or the want of it, and that of what may be called the visible public of his day ; while we may be sure there must have been then, as there are now, a few to delight in following the spirit of the poet, and with more or less fidelity seek to discover something in nature of an invisible character “correspondent” to it ; the search for which will continue to task and to reward the student in all ages ; for, without adopting the theories or expositions of Swedenborg, it can hardly be denied, except by the most downright fatalist, that there is what may be properly called a spiritual world, where the genuine poet will be found at home in his own Arcadia. Philosophy is not without a clue to the true ground of the poet’s dreams and visions ; and it lies chiefly in the dogma, that there can be no *modal* manifestation in nature, which is not based upon the *substantial*—without, or out of which, there is nothing at all : in which **NOTHING**, we will add, a certain class of seekers tell us they find all things.

But we do not propose to discuss these matters, and will enter without farther preface upon the purpose we have in view.

Among the minor poems of Spenser, the reader may have noticed, or may easily turn to, one entitled *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*, published in 1591 or 1595. It was addressed or dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh, by the poet himself, who calls it a “simple Pastoral;” and whilst, in the usual strain of dedications, the poet speaks of the poem as “unworthy” the higher “conceipt” of his noble friend, for its “meanness of style,” he asserts its agreement “with truth, in circumstance and matter;” more than hinting, in the same dedication, at what the poet calls the “malice of evil mouths, which are always [says he] open to carpe at and misconstrue [his] simple meaning.”

A modern editor quotes from the *Retrospective Review*, to show that the object of the poet (in *Colin Clouts*) was to give “an account of his return to England, and of his presentation to Queen Elizabeth, and of several persons attached to the Court;” and the Reviewer remarks, that the poem might have been highly interesting at the time it was written, but that its chief interest is now lost, declaring that “it possesses nothing striking, either in character or description, to attract a modern reader”—but he should have added, a modern reader of the Hume

school, who would doubtless see as little to attract in this pastoral as in the more elaborate poem of the Faerie Queene.

We will now show, by a few notes, the general purpose of this pastoral, one of the most remarkable poems in the English language, and leave the reader to reflect upon the probable result of a study of the Faerie Queene itself, an acknowledged allegory, if pursued from some similar point of view ; and as we feel under no obligations of secrecy, we will say at once, that :

The Pastoral, entitled Colin Clouts Come Home Again, was not designed to refer, in the remotest degree, to Queen Elizabeth ; but the poem agrees “with truth in circumstance and matter” (as the dedication reads), with a mental journey by the poet himself, in the very spirit of Christianity, into what may be called the spiritual world—the Arcadia of the ancient poets; where the poet meets with the mystic Queen of Arcadia, the object of so much passionate devotion by a long succession of *spirituelle* poets, who, under the guise of addressing some Delia, or Celia, or Lilia, Phœbe, Daphne, or Chloe, have cloaked a love which, because not generally recognised, except as addressed to some veritable woman,

has been usually regarded as having no other subject than woman ; who, indeed, may become the true object of love, as represented in the drama of King Rene's daughter, when her beauty and perfection are seen in the light of what must be called, for the sake of truth, Divine Love.

Let the reader admit for a moment that there is a land, an unseen land, which, in order to have a name for it, we will call Arcadia ; but, though called a *land*, this word is only used figuratively. It represents not merely an imaginary land, but the land of imagination, a word of immense significance ; for from that land the world receives its Iliads, Odysseys, and *Aeneids*, a great multitude of Promethean stories, and innumerable tales of chivalry in both prose and verse.

Let it be supposed, we say, as a mere hypothesis, that there is an Arcadian land, a world in which poets find a congenial home, where they *conceive* the great works of Art through which their names become immortal. This is making but a very small demand upon the candor of the student, who must reasonably agree that the ancient and ever-renewed claim of the poets, that their art proceeds from a

divine gift, the nature of which can perhaps only be properly known by poets themselves, must have some truth to rest upon. Genuine poets—we do not refer to mere versifiers, who have often only an acquired skill in word-jingling—are a peculiar class of men, not as having an actual faculty unknown to other men, but because of a peculiar awakening of their faculties which, under favorable circumstances, opens to them such views of life as, for want of a better explanation, may be considered a divine gift—very much as the religious faculty, though common to all mankind, receives at times an extraordinary illumination, as if from a supernatural source; and it may indeed be regarded as supernatural, if we define nature from a low point of view, as the mere material fabric of the world.

We desire to induce the reader to accept the suggestion as probable, that poets of the class referred to have access, either through nature or grace, to a certain interior world of ideas and feelings, which for the present we will call Arcadia; not a visible place, yet often figured as a *land*, with mountains and streams, where the sun, or we may say the moon, if we please, never sets, and where there is a never-ending summer—as we find

it referred to in the 18th Sonnet of Shakespeare in the line :

“Thy eternal summer shall not fade;”

or again in the 97th Sonnet :

“For summer and his pleasures wait on thee.”

This land, or Arcadia, is well described in the little poem of Heriot de Borderie, inserted in the preface to Remarks on Alchemy and the Alchemists.

“There is an isle
Full, as they say, of good things;—fruits and trees
And pleasant verdure; a very master-piece
Of nature’s; where the men immortally
Live, following all delights and pleasures. There
Is not, nor ever hath been, Winter’s cold
Or Summer’s heat, the season still the same,—
One gracious Spring, where all, e’en those worst used
By fortune, are content. Earth willingly
Pours out her blessing: the words “thine” and “mine”
Are not known ’mongst them: all is common, free
From pain and jealous grudging. Reason rules,
Not fantasy: every one knows well
What he would ask of other; every one
What to command: thus every one hath that
Which he doth ask; what is commanded, does.
This island hath the name of Fortunate;

And, as they tell, is governed by a Queen
Well-spoken and discreet, and therewithal
So beautiful, that, with one single beam
Of her great beauty, all the country round
Is rendered shining. When she sees arrive
(As there are many so exceeding curious
They have no fear of danger 'fore their eyes)
Those who come suing to her, and aspire
After the happiness which she to each
Doth promise in her city, she doth make
The strangers come together; and forthwith,
Ere she consenteth to retain them there,
Sends for a certain season all to sleep.
When they have slept so much as there is need,
Then wake they them again, and summon them
Into her presence. There awaits them not
Excuse or caution; speech however bland,
Or importunity of cries. Each bears
That on his forehead written visibly,
Wherof he hath been dreaming. They whose dreams
Have been of birds and hounds, are straight dismissed;
And at her royal mandate led away,
To dwell thence-forward with such beasts as these.
He who hath dreamed of sconces broken, war,
And turmoil, and sedition, glory won,
And highest feats achieved, is, in like guise,
An exile from her court; whilst one whose brow
Is pale, and dead, and withered, showing care

Of pelf and riches, she no less denies
To be his queen and mistress. None, in brief,
Reserves she of the dreamers in her isle,
Save him, that, when awakened he returns,
Betrayeth tokenes that of her rare beauty
His dreams have been. So great delight hath she
In being and in seeming beautiful,
Such dreamer is right welcome to her isle.

All this is held a fable: but who first
Made and recited it hath, in this fable,
Shadowed a Truth.

This isle we take to be the Arcadian land. It is owned or visited in common by all genuine poets, who, because they know that admission to that beautiful country is accorded only to a favored class, and to those only upon their being in possession of certain required credentials, rarely give any hint even of the true character of the country to the non-elect. They only write of it in a mystery, or under the guise of writing about something else, which, as in the poem of Colin Clouts, may be understood, or misunderstood, as a poem in honor of Queen Elizabeth; who has, however, as little to do with that poem as she has with the Apocalypse and its New Jerusalem. We propose to show that

Colin Clouts Come Home Again, is a poetic hint, not only of the reality of the Arcadian land, but that it lets the reader into some acquaintance with the method of access to it, and particularly gives us a glimpse of the Queen herself under the name of Cynthia—which may be applicable to the Queen of the isle in Borderie's poem just recited.

We here give the poem itself, according to its name, with all its notes, as we find it in the 5th volume of Spenser's Works, published in Boston by Little & Brown, 1860. The dissent of the author of the Remarks from the opinion expressed in some of the *notes*, will appear in the progress of the Remarks.

COLIN CLOUTS
COME HOME AGAINE.

BY ED. SP.

1595.

TO THE RIGHT WORTHY AND NOBLE KNIGHT

SIR WALTER RALEIGH,

CAPTAINE OF HER MAIESTIES GUARD, LORD WARDEIN OF
THE STANNERIES, AND LIEUTENANT OF
THE COUNTIE OF CORNWALL.

SIR,

THAT you may see that I am not alwaies ydle as yee thinke, though not greatly well occupied, nor altogether undutifull, though not precisely officious, I make you present of this simple Pastorall, unworthie of your higher conceipt for the meanesse of the stile, but agreeing with the truth in circumstance and matter. The which I humbly beseech you to accept in part of paiement of the infinite debt, in which I acknowledge my selfe bounden unto you for your singular favours, and sundrie good turnes, shewed to me at my late being in England; and with your good countenance protect against the malice of evill mouthes, which are alwaies wide open to carpe at and misconstrue my simple meaning. I pray continually for your happinesse. From my house of Kilcolman, the 27. of December.

1591. [rather perhaps 1595.]

Yours ever humbly,

ED. SP.

COLIN CLOUTS COME HOME AGAINE.*

THE shepheards boy (best knownen by that name)
That after Tityrus first sung his lay,
Laies of sweet love, without rebuke or blame,
Sate (as his custome was) upon a day,
Charming¹ his oaten pipe unto his peres, 5
The shepheard swaines that did about him play:
Who all the while, with greedie listfull eares,
Did stand astonisht at his curious skill,
Like hartlesse deare, dismayd with thunders sound.

¹ *Charming*, tuning.

Ver. 2.—*Tityrus.*] Chaucer.

* “In the year 1595, Spenser published *Colin Clouts come Home againe*, a sort of pastoral, giving an account of his return to England, of his presentation to Queen Elizabeth, and of several persons attached to the court. It might be highly interesting at the time it was written, but its chief interest is now lost. It possesses nothing striking, either in character or description, to attract a modern reader.”—*Retrospective Review*.

[The author of the Remarks dissents from this opinion, and from several others expressed in the notes to this poem.]

10

At last, when as he piped had his fill,
 He rested him: and, sitting then around,
 One of those groomes (a iolly groome was he,
 As ever piped on an oaten reed,
 And lov'd this shepheard dearest in degree,
 Hight¹ Hobbinol;) gan thus to him areed. 15

“Colin, my liefe,² my life, how great a losse
 Had all the shepheards nation by thy lacke!
 And I, poore swaine, of many, greatest crosse!
 That, sith³ thy Muse first since thy turning backe
 Was heard to sound as she was wont on hye, 20
 Has made us all so blessed and so blythe.
 Whilst thou wast hence, all dead in dole⁴ did lie:
 The woods were heard to waile full many a sythe,⁵
 And all their birds with silence to complaine:
 The fields with faded flowers did seem to mourne, 25
 And all their flocks from feeding to refrain:
 The running waters wept for thy returne,
 And all their fish with languor did lament:
 But now both woods and fields and floods revive,
 Sith³ thou art come, their cause of merriment, 30
 That us, late dead, hast made againe alive:
 But were it not too painefull to repeat
 The passed fortunes, which to thee befell

¹ *Hight*, called.

³ *Sith*, since.

⁵ *Sythe*, time.

² *Liefe*, dear.

⁴ *Dole*, grief.

Ver. 15.—*Hobbinol.*] This is Spenser's friend, Gabriel Harvey.

In thy late voyage, we thee would entreat,
Now at thy leisure them to us to tell." 35
To whom the shepheard gently answered thus;
" Hobbin, thou temptest me to that I covet:
For of good passed newly to discus,
By dubble usurie doth twise renew it.
And since I saw that angels blessed eie, 40
Her worlds bright sun, her heavens fairest light,
My mind, full of my thoughts satietie,
Doth feed on sweet contentment of that sight:
Since that same day in nougnt I take delight,
Ne feeling have in any earthly pleasure, 45
But in remembrance of that glory bright,
My lifes sole blisse, my hearts eternall threasure.
Wake then, my pipe; my sleepie Muse, awake;
Till I have told her praises lasting long:
Hobbin desires, thou maist it not forsake;— 50
Harke then, ye iolly shepheards, to my song."
With that they all gan throng about him neare,
With hungrie eares to heare his harmonie:
The whiles their flocks, devoyd of dangers feare,
Did round about them feed at libertie. 55

"One day (quoth he) I sat (as was my trade)
Under the foote of Mole, that mountaine hore,
Keeping my sheepe amongst the cooly shade

Of the greene alders by the Mullaes shore:
 There a straunge shepheard chaunst to find me out, 60
 Whether allured with my pipes delight,
 Whose pleasing sound yshrilled¹ far about,
 Or thither led by chaunce, I know not right:
 Whom when I asked from what place he came,
 And how he hight,² himselfe he did ycleewe³ 65
 The Shepheard of the Ocean by name,
 And said he came far from the main-sea deepe.
 He, sitting me beside in that same shade,
 Provoked me to plaie some pleasant fit⁴;
 And, when he heard the musicke which I made, 70
 He found himselfe full greatly pleasead at it:
 Yet, æmuling⁵ my pipe, he tooke in hond
 My pipe, before that æmuled of many,
 And plaid thereon; (for well that skill he cond⁶);
 Himselfe as skilfull in that art as any. 75
 He pip'd, I sung; and, when he sung, I piped;

¹ *Yshrilled*, sounded shrill. ² *Hight*, was called.

³ *Ycleewe*, call.

⁴ *Fit*, strain.

⁵ *Xemuling*, rivalling.

⁶ *Cond*, knew.

Ver. 59.—*By the Mullaes shore.*] “The Mulla is the river *Awbeg*, which runs not far from Kilcolman, Spenser’s residence, and washes Buttevant, Doneraile, Castletown-Roch, &c.”—TODD.

Ver. 66.—*The Shepheard of the Ocean.*] This is Sir Walter Raleigh, whom Spenser accompanied into England, and by whom he was introduced to Queen Elizabeth.

By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery;
 Neither envying other, nor envied,
 So piped we, untill we both were weary."

There interrupting him, a bonie swaine, 80
 That Cuddy hight,¹ him thus atweene bespake:
 " And, should it not thy readie course restraine,
 I would request thee, Colin, for my sake,
 To tell what thou didst sing, when he did plaie;
 For well I weene it worth recounting was, 85
 Whether it were some hymne, or morall laie,
 Or carol made to praise thy loved lasse."

" Nor of my love, nor of my lasse, (quoth he,)
 I then did sing, as then occasion fell:
 For love had me forlorne, forlorne of me, 90
 That made me in that desart choose to dwell.
 But of my river Bregogs love I soong,
 Which to the shiny Mulla he did beare,
 And yet doth beare, and ever will, so long
 As water doth within his bancks appeare." 95

" Of fellowship (said then that bony Boy)
 Record to us that lovely lay againe:
 The staie whereof shall nought these eares annoy
 Who all that Colin makes do covet faine."

" Heare then (quoth he) the tenor of my tale, 100
 In sort as I it to that shepheard told:

¹ *Hight*, was called.

No leasing¹ new, nor grandams fable stale,
But auncient truth confirm'd with credence old.

“Old father Mole, (Mole hight that mountain gray
That walls the northside of Armulla dale;) 105
He had a daughter fresh as floure of May,
Which gave that name unto that pleasant vale;
Mulla, the daughter of old Mole, so hight²
The Nymph, which of that water course has charge,
That, springing out of Mole, doth run downe right 110
To Buttevant, where, spreading forth at large,
It giveth name unto that auncient Cittie,
Which Kilnemullah cleped³ is of old;
Whose ragged ruines breed great ruth and pittie
To travailers, which it from far behold. 115
Full faine she lov’d, and was belov’d full faine
Of her owne brother river, Bregog hight,²
So hight² because of this deceitfull traine,
Which he with Mulla wrought to win delight.
But her old sire more carefull of her good, 120
And meaning her much better to preferre,
Did thinke to match her with the neighbour flood,
Which Allo hight,² Broad-water called farre;
And wrought so well with his continuall paine,

¹ *Leasing*, falsehood. ² *Hight*, called. ³ *Cleped*, named.

Ver. 117.—*Bregog hight.*] *Bregog*, according to Todd, means *false* or *lying*.

That he that river for his daughter wonne : 125
 The dowre agreed, the day assigned plaine,
 The place appointed where it should be doone.
 Nath'lesse the Nymph her former liking held ;
 For love will not be drawne, but must be ledde ;
 And Bregog did so well her fancie weld,¹ 130
 That her good will he got her first to wedde.
 But for her father, sitting still on hie,
 Did warily still watch which way she went,
 And eke from far observ'd, with iealous eie,
 Which way his course the wanton Bregog bent ; 135
 Him to deceive, for all his watchfull ward,
 The wily lover did devise this slight :
 First into many parts his streme he shar'd,
 That, whilst the one was watcht, the other might
 Passe unespide to meeete her by the way ; 140
 And then, besides, those little streames so broken
 He under ground so closely² did convay,
 That of their passage doth appeare no token,
 Till they into the Mullaes water slide.
 So secretly did he his love enioy : 145
 Yet not so secret, but it was descride,
 And told her father by a shepheards boy.
 Who, wondrous wroth for that so foule despight,
 In great avenge did roll downe from his hill
 Huge mightie stones, the which encomber might 150

¹ *Weld*, wield, sway.² *Closely*, secretly.

His passage, and his water-courses spill.¹
 So of a River, which he was of old,
 He none was made, but scattred all to nought;
 And, lost emong those rocks into him rold,
 Did lose his name: so deare his love he bought." 155

Which having said, him Thestylis bespake;
 "Now by my life this was a mery lay,
 Worthie of Colin selfe, that did it make.
 But read now eke, of friendship I thee pray,
 What dittie did that other shepheard sing: 160
 For I do covet most the same to heare,
 As men use most to covet forreine thing."

"That shall I eke (quoth he) to you declare:
 His song was all a lamentable lay
 Of great unkindnesse, and of usage hard, 165
 Of Cynthia the Ladie of the Sea,
 Which from her presence faultlesse him debard.
 And ever and anon, with singulfs rife,²
 He cryed out, to make his undersong;
 Ah! my loves queene, and goddesse of my life, 170
 Who shall me pittie, when thou doest me wrong?"

Then gan a gentle bonylasse to speake,
 That Marin hight; "Right well he sure did plaine,

¹ *Spill*, spoil.

² *Singulfs rife*, frequent sobs.

Ver. 166.—*Of Cynthia the Ladie of the Sea.*] Queen Elizabeth; probably an allusion to Sir W. Raleigh's temporary disgrace and banishment from court, on account of his intrigue with Elizabeth Throgmorton.

That could great Cynthiaes sore displeasure breake,
And move to take him to her grace againe. 175
But tell on further, Colin, as befell
Twixt him and thee, that thee did hence dissuade."

" When thus our pipes we both had wearied well,
(Quoth he,) and each an end of singing made,
He gan to cast great lyking to my lore, 180
And great dislyking to my lucklesse lot,
That banisht had my selfe, like wight forlore,¹
Into that waste, where I was quite forgot.
The which to leave, thenceforth he counseld mee,
Unmeet for man, in whom was ought regardfull, 185
And wend² with him, his Cynthia to see;
Whose grace was great, and bounty most rewardfull.
Besides her peerlesse skill in making³ well,
And all the ornaments of wondrous wit,
Such as all womankynd did far excell; 190
Such as the world admir'd, and praised it:
So what with hope of good, and hate of ill,
He me perswaded forth with him to fare.
Nought tooke I with me, but mine oaten quill:
Small needments else need shepheard to prepare. 195
So to the sea we came; the sea, that is
A world of waters heaped up on hie,
Rolling like mountaines in wide wildernesse,
Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse crie."

¹ *Forlore, forlorn.*

² *Wend, go.*

³ *Making, versifying.*

" And is the sea (quoth Coridon) so fearfull?" 200

" Fearful much more (quoth he) then hart can fear:
 Thousand wyld beasts with deep mouthes gaping direfull
 Therin stil wait poore passengers to teare.
 Who life doth loath, and longs death to behold,
 Before he die, alreadie dead with feare, 205
 And yet would live with heart halfe stonie cold,
 Let him to sea, and he shall see it there.
 And yet as ghastly dreadfull, as it seemes,
 Bold men, presuming life for gaine to sell,
 Dare tempt that gulf, and in those wandring stremes 210
 Seek waies unknowne, waies leading down to hell.
 For, as we stood there waiting on the strond,
 Behold, an huge great vessell to us came,
 Dauncing upon the waters back to lond,
 As if it scornd the daunger of the same; 215
 Yet was it but a wooden frame and fraile,
 Glewed togither with some subtile matter.
 Yet had it armes and wings, and head and taile,
 And life to move it selfe upon the water.
 Strange thing! how bold and swift the monster was, 220
 That neither car'd for wynd, nor haile, nor raine,
 Nor swelling waves, but thorough them did passe
 So proudly, that she made them roare againe.
 The same aboord us gently did receave,
 And without harme us farre away did beare, 225
 So farre that land, our mother, us did leave,

And nought but sea and heaven to us appeare.
 Then hartelesse quite, and full of inward feare,
 That shepheard I besought to me to tell,
 Under what skie, or in what world we were, 230
 In which I saw no living people dwell.
 Who, me recomforting all that he might,
 Told me that that same was the Regiment¹
 Of a great shepheardesse, that Cynthia hight,
 His liege, his Ladie, and his lifes Regent.— 235
 “ If then (quoth I) a shepheardesse she bee,
 Where be the flockes and heards, which she doth keep?
 And where may I the hills and pastures see,
 On which she useth for to feed her sheepe? ”
 “ These be the hills, (quoth he,) the surges hie, 240
 On which faire Cynthia her heards doth feed:
 Her heards be thousand fishes with their frie,
 Which in the bosome of the billowes breed.
 Of them the shepheard which hath charge in chief,
 Is Triton, blowing loud his wreathed horne: 245
 At sound whereof, they all for their relief
 Wend too and fro at evening and at morne.
 And Protens eke with him does drive his heard
 Of stinking seales and porcpisces² together,
 With hoary head and deawy dropping beard, 250
 Compelling them which way he list, and whether.
 And I, among the rest, of many least,

¹ *Regiment*, kingdom.² *Porcpisces*, porpoises.

Have in the Ocean charge to me assynd;
 Where I will live or die at her behest,
 And serve and honour her with faithfull mind. 255
 Besides an hundred Nymphs all heavenly borne,
 And of immortall race, doo still attend
 To wash faire Cynthiaes sheep, when they be shorne,
 And fold them up, when they have made an end.
 Those be the shepheards which my Cynthia serve 260
 At sea, beside a thousand moe at land:
 For land and sea my Cynthia doth deserve
 To have in her commandēment at hand."

Thereat I wondred much, till, wondring more
 And more, at length we land far off descriye: 265
 Which sight much gladed me; for much afore
 I feard, least land we never should have eyde:
 Thereto our ship her course directly bent,
 As if the way she perfectly had knowne.
 We Lunday passe; by that same name is ment 270
 An island, which the first to west was showne.
 From thence another world of land we kend,¹
 Floting amid the sea in ieopardie,
 And round about with mightie white rocks hemd,
 Against the seas encroching cruetie. 275
 Those same, the shepheard told me, were the fields
 In which dame Cynthia her landheards fed;
 Faire goodly fields, then which Armulla yields

¹ *Kend*, discerned.

None fairer, nor more fruitfull to be red.¹
The first, to which we nigh approached, was 280
An high headland thrust far into the sea,
Like to an horne, whereof the name it has,
Yet seemd to be a goodly pleasant lea:
There did a loftie mount at first us greet,
Which did a stately heape of stones upreare, 285
That seemd amid the surges for to fleet,²
Much greater then that frame, which us did beare:
There did our ship her fruitfull wombe unlade,
And put us all ashore on Cynthias land.

"What land is that thou meanst, (then Cuddy sayd.)
And is there other then whereon we stand?" 290
"Ah! Cuddy, (then quoth Colin,) thou's a fon,³
That hast not seene least part of natures worke:
Much more there is unkend⁴ then thou doest kon,⁵
And much more that does from mens knowledge
lurke. 295

For that same land much larger is then this,
And other men and beasts and birds doth feed :
There fruitfull corne, faire trees, fresh herbage is,
And all things else that living creatures need.
Besides most goodly rivers there appeare, 300
No whit inferiour to thy Fanchins praise,

¹ *Red*, perceived. ² *Fleet*, float. ³ *Thous a fon*, thou art a fool.

⁴ *Unkend*, unknown. ⁵ *Kon*, know.

Or unto Allo, or to Mulla cleare :
 Nought hast thou, foolish boy, seene in thy daies."

"But if that land be there (quoth he) as here,
 And is theyr heaven likewise there all one ? 305
 And, if like heaven, be heavenly graces there,
 Like as in this same world where we do wone¹?"

"Both heaven and heavenly graces do much more
 (Quoth he) abound in that same land then this.

For there all happie peace and plenteous store 310
 Conspire in one to make contented blisse :

No wayling there nor wretchednesse is heard,
 No bloodie issues nor no leprosies,

No griesly famine, nor no raging sweard,²

No nightly bodrags,³ nor no hue and cries ; 315
 The shepheards there abroad may safely lie,

On hills and downes, withouten dread or daunger :
 No ravenous wolves the good mans hope destroy,
 Nor outlawes fell affray the forest raunger.

There learned arts do florish in great honor, 320

And Poets wits are had in peerlesse price :

Religion hath lay powre to rest upon her,
 Advancing vertue and suppressing vice.

For end, all good, all grace there freely growes,

Had people grace it gratefully to use : 325

For God his gifts there plenteously bestowes,
 But gracelesse men them greatly do abuse."

¹ *Wone*, dwell. ² *Sweard*, sword. ³ *Bodrags*, border ravaging.

“But say on further (then said Corylas)
The rest of thine adventures, that betyded.¹”

“Foorth on our voyage we by land did passe, 330
(Quoth he,) as that same shepheard still us guyded,
Untill that we to Cynthiaes presence came:
Whose glorie greater then my simple thought,
I found much greater then the former fame;
Such greatnes I cannot compare to ought: 335
But if I her like ought on earth might read,²
I would her lyken to a crowne of lillies
Upon a virgin brydes adorned head,
With roses dight³ and goold⁴ and daffadillies;
Or like the circlet of a turtle true, 340
In which all colours of the rainbow bee;
Or like faire Phebes garlond shining new,
In which all pure perfection one may see.
But vaine it is to thinke, by paragone⁵
Of earthly things, to iudge of things divine: 345
Her power, her mercy, and her wisdome, none
Can deeme, but who the Godhead can define.
Why then do I, base shepheard, bold and blind,
Presume the things so sacred to prophane?
More fit it is t' adore, with humble mind, 350
The image of the heavens in shape humane.”

With that Alexis broke his tale asunder,

¹ *Betyded*, happened. ² *Read*, perceive. ³ *Dight*, adorned.

⁴ *Goold*, marigolds. ⁵ *Paragone*, comparison.

Saying; “By wondring at thy Cynthiaes praise,
 Colin, thy selfe thou mak’st us more to wonder,
 And her upraising doest thy selfe upraise. 355
 But let us heare what grace she shewed thee,
 And how that shepheard strange thy cause advanced.”

“The Shepheard of the Ocean (quoth he)
 Unto that Goddesse grace me first enhanced,
 And to mine oaten pipe enclin’d her eare, 360
 That she thenceforth therein gan take delight,
 And it desir’d at timely houres to heare,
 All were my notes but rude and roughly dight;
 For not by measure of her owne great mynd,
 And wondrous worth, she mott¹ my simple song, 365
 But ioyd that country shepheard ought could fynd
 Worth harkening to, emongst the learned throng.”

“Why? (said Alexis then,) what needeth shee
 That is so great a shepheardesse her selfe,
 And hath so many shepheards in her fee,² 370
 To heare thee sing, a simple silly elfe?
 Or be the shepheards which do serve her laesie,³
 That they list not their mery pipes applie?
 Or be their pipes untunable and craesie,
 That they cannot her honour worthylie?” 375

“Ah! nay (said Colin) neither so, nor so:
 For better shepheards be not under skie,

¹ *Mott*, meted, measured.

² *In her fee*, at her command.

³ *Laesie*, lazy.

Nor better hable, when they list to blow
 Their pipes aloud, her name to glorifie.
 There is good Harpalus, now woxen aged 380
 In faithful service of faire Cynthia:
 And there is Corydon through meanly waged,
 Yet hablest wit of most I know this day.
 And there is sad Alcyon bent to mourne,
 Though fit to frame an everlasting dittie, 385
 Whose gentle spright for Daphnes death doth tourn
 Sweet layes of love to endlesse plaints of pittie.
 Ah! pensive boy, pursue that brave concept,
 In thy sweet Eglantine of Meriflure;
 Lift up thy notes unto their wonted height, 390
 That may thy Muse and mates to mirth allure.
 There eke is Palin worthie of great praise,
 Albe¹ he envie at my rustick quill:
 And there is pleasing Alcon, could he raise
 His tunes from laies to matter of more skill. 395

¹ *Albe*, although.

Ver. 380.—*Harpalus.*] “*Harpalus* is probably Barnaby Googe, who was first a retainer to Cecil, and afterwards, in 1563, a gentleman pensioner to the queen.”—TODD.

Ver. 382.—*Corydon.*] *Corydon*, according to the same authority, is Abraham Fraunce, a poet and friend of Sir Philip Sidney.

Ver. 384.—*Alcyon.*] *Alcyon* is Sir Arthur Gorges, upon the death of whose wife, here mentioned under the name of *Daphne*, Spenser wrote his “*Daphnaida.*”

Ver. 392.—*Palin.*] Todd conjectures that *Palin* means Thomas Chaloner, a poet of some reputation in his day.

And there is old Palemon free from spight,
 Whose carefull pipe may make the hearer rew :
 Yet he himselfe may rewed be more right,
 That sung so long untill quite hoarse he grew.
 And there is Alabaster throughly¹ taught 400
 In all this skill, though knownen yet to few ;
 Yet, were he knowne to Cynthia as he ought,
 His Elisëis would be redde anew.

Who lives that can match that heroick song,
 Which he hath of that mightie Princesse made? 405
 O dreaded Dread, do not thy selfe that wrong,
 To let thy fame lie so in hidden shade:
 But call it forth, O call him forth to thee,
 To end thy glorie which he hath begun :
 That, when he finisht hath as it should be, 410
 No braver Poeme can be under sun.

Nor Po nor Tyburs swans so much renowned,
 Nor all the brood of Greece so highly praised,
 Can match that Muse when it with bayes is crowned,
 And to the pitch of her perfection raised. 415
 And there is a new shepheard late up sprong,

¹ *Throughly*, thoroughly.

Ver. 396.—*Palemon.*] “Old Palemon seems to point at Thomas Churchyard, who wrote a prodigious number of poetical pieces.”—TODD.

Ver. 400.—*Alabaster.*] This is a real name.—William Alabaster was a scholar and poet of Spenser’s time, of considerable eminence. His poem of Elisëis, here mentioned, was never printed, but still exists among the MSS. of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

The which doth all afore him far surpassee ;
 Appearing well in that well tuned song,
 Which late he sung unto a scornful lasse.
 Yet doth his trembling Muse but lowly flie, 420
 As daring not too rashly mount on hight,
 And doth her tender plumes as yet but trie
 In loves soft laies and looser thoughts delight.
 Then rouze thy feathers quickly, Daniell,
 And to what course thou please thy self advance : 425
 But most, me seemes, thy accent will excell
 In tragick plaints and passionate mischance.
 And there that Shepheard of the Ocean is,
 That spends his wit in loves consuming smart:
 Full sweetly tempred is that Muse of his, 430
 That can empierce a Princes mightie hart.
 There also is (ah no, he is not now !)
 But since I said he is, he quite is gone,
 Amyntas quite is gone and lies full low,
 Having his Amaryllis left to mone. 435
 Helpe, O ye shepheards, helpe ye all in this,
 Helpe Amaryllis this her losse to mourne :
 Her losse is yours, your losse Amyntas is,
 Amyntas, floure of shepheards pride forlorne :

Ver. 424.—*Daniell.*] Samuel Daniell, a well-known English poet, of whom it is enough to say, that he has been highly commended by Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Ver. 438.—*Amyntas.*] *Amyntas*, according to Todd, moans Ferdinando Earl of Derby, a nobleman of poetical taste, who died in 1594.

He whilst he lived was the noblest swaine, 440
 That ever piped in an oaten quill:
 Both did he other, which could pipe, maintaine,
 And eke could pipe himselfe with passing skill.
 And there, though last not least, in Aetion;
 A gentler shepheard may no where be found: 445
 Whose Muse, full of high thoughts invention,
 Doth like himselfe heroically sound.
 All these, and many others mo remaine,
 Now, after Astrofell is dead and gone:
 But, while as Astrofell did live and raine, 450
 Amongst all these was none his paragone.
 All these do florish in their sundry kynd,
 And do their Cynthia immortall make:
 Yet found I lyking in her royall mynd,
 Not for my skill, but for that shepheards sake." 455

Then spake a lovely lasse, hight Lucida;
 "Shepheard, enough of shepheards thou hast told,
 Which favour thee, and honour Cynthia:
 But of so many nymphs, which she doth hold
 In her retinew, thou hast nothing sayd; 460
 That seems, with none of them thou favor foundest,
 Or art ingratefull to each gentle mayd,
 That none of all their due deserts resoundest."

Ver. 444.—*Action.*] Aetion, according to Todd, is Michael Drayton, the well-known author of the Polyolbion, &c.

Ver. 449—*Astrofell.*] Sir Philip Sidney.

“ Ah far be it (quoth Colin Clout) fro me,
 That I of gentle mayds should ill deserve: 465
 For that my selfe I do professe to be
 Vassall to one, whom all my dayes I serve;
 The beame of beautie sparkled from above,
 The floure of vertue and pure chastitie,
 The blossome of sweet ioy and perfect love 470
 The pearle of peerlesse grace and modestie:
 To her my thoughts I daily dedicate,
 To her my heart I nightly martyrise¹:
 To her my love I lowly do prostrate,
 To her my life I wholly sacrifice: 475
 My thought, my heart, my love, my life is shee,
 And I hers ever onely, ever one:
 One ever I all vowed hers to bee,
 One ever I, and others never none.”

Then thus Melissa said; “ Thrise happie Mayd, 480
 Whom thou doest so enforce to deifie:
 That woods, and hills, and valleyes thou hast made
 Her name to echo unto heaven hie.
 But say, who else vouchsafed thee of grace? ”

“ They all (quoth he) me graced goodly well, 485
 That all I praise; but, in the highest place,
 Urania, sister unto Astrofell,

¹ *Martyrise*, devote as a martyr.

Ver. 487.—*Urania*, &c.] Mary Countess of Pembroke, sister of Sir Philip Sidney, the subject of Ben Jonson's well-known epitaph:

In whose brave mynd, as in a golden cofer,
 All heavenly gifts and riches locked are;
 More rich then pearles of Ynde, or gold of Opher, 490
 And in her sex more wonderfull and rare.
 Ne lesse praise-worthie I Theana read,
 Whose goodly beames though they be over dight¹
 With mourning stole² of carefull³ wydowhead,
 Yet through that darksome vale do glister bright; 495
 She is the well of bountie and brave mynd,
 Excelling most in glorie and great light:
 She is the ornament of womankind,
 And courts chief garlond with all vertues dight.
 Therefore great Cynthia her in chiefest grace 500
 Doth hold, and next unto her selfe advance,
 Well worthie of so honourable place,
 For her great worth and noble governance.
 Ne lesse praise-worthie is her sister deare,
 Faire Marian, the Muses onely darling: 505

“ Underneath this sable herse
 Lies the subject of all verse;
 Sidney’s sister, Pembroke’s mother:
 Death, ere thou hast killed another,
 Fair, and learned, and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee.”

¹ Over dight, covered over. ² Stole, robe. ³ Carefull, sorrowfull.

Ver. 492.—*Theana.*] *Theana*, according to Todd, is Anne, third wife of the Earl of Warwick, whose exemplary widowhood is commended in the *Ruines of Time*, ver. 250, &c.

Ver. 505.—*Marian.*] Margaret Countess of Cumberland, to whom and her sister, the Countess of Warwick, Spenser inscribes his *Four Hymns*.

Whose beautie shyneth as the morning cleare,
 With silver deaw upon the roses pearling.
 Ne lesse praise-worthie is Mansilia,
 Best knowne by bearing up great Cynthiaes traine :
 That same is she to whom Daphnaida 510
 Upon her neeces death I did complaine :
 She is the paterne of true womanhead,
 And onely mirrhor of feminitie :
 Worthie next after Cynthia to tread,
 As she is next her in nobilitie. 515
 Ne lesse praise-worthie Galathea seemes,
 Then best of all that honourable crew,
 Faire Galathea with bright shining beames,
 Inflaming feeble eyes that her do view.
 She there then waited upon Cynthia, 520
 Yet there is not her won¹; but here with us
 About the borders of our rich Coshma,
 Now made of Maa, the Nymph delitious.
 Ne lesse praise-worthie faire Neæra is,
 Neæra ours, not theirs, though there she be ; 525
 For of the famous Shure, the Nymph she is,
 For high desert, advaunst to that degree.
 She is the blosome of grace and curtesie,
 Adorned with all honourable parts :

¹ *Won*, dwelling.

Ver. 508.—*Mansilia*,] Helena Marchioness of Northampton, to whom *Daphnaida* is inscribed.

She is the braunch of true nobilitie, 530
 Belov'd of high and low with faithfull harts.
 Ne lesse praise-worthie Stella do I read,
 Though nought my praises of her needed arre,
 Whom verse of noblest shepheard lately dead
 Hath prais'd and rais'd above each other starre. 535
 Ne lesse praise-worthie are the sisters three,
 The honor of the noble familie:
 Of which I meanest boast my selfe to be,
 And most that unto them I am so nie:
 Phyllis, Charillis, and sweet Amaryllis. 540
 Phyllis, the faire, is eldest of the three:
 The next to her is bountifull Charillis:
 But th' youngest is the highest in degree.
 Phyllis, the floure of rare perfection,
 Faire spreading forth her leaves with fresh delight, 545
 That, with their beauties amorous reflexion,
 Bereave of sence each rash beholders sight.
 But sweet Charillis is the paragone

Ver. 532.—*Stella.*] This is Lady Penelope Devereux, daughter of Walter Earl of Essex, of whom Sir Philip Sidney was an unsuccessful lover. He celebrated her in his Arcadia under the name of Philoclea, and in that of Stella in his poems of Astrofell. She became the wife of Robert Lord Rich.

Ver. 540.—*Phyllis, &c.*] On Todd's authority, Phillis, Charillis, and Amaryllis are the three daughters of Sir John Spenser. Charillis was married, at this time, to Sackville Lord Buckhurst, being her third husband. *Mother Hubberds Tale* is dedicated to her. Amaryllis is Lady Strange, to whom the *Teares of the Muses* is inscribed. Phillis is Lady Carey, to whom *Muiopotmos* is inscribed.

Of peerlesse price, and ornament of praise,
Admyr'd of all, yet envied of none, 550
Through the myld temperance of her goodly raias.
Thrise happie do I hold thee, noble swaine,
The which art of so rich a spoile possest,
And, it embracing deare without disdaine,
Hast sole possession in so chaste a brest: 555
Of all the shepheards daughters which there bee,
And yet there be the fairest under skie,
Or that elsewhere I ever yet did see,
A fairer Nymph yet never saw mine eie;
She is the pride and primrose of the rest, 560
Made by the Maker selfe to be admired;
And like a goodly beacon high addrest,
That is with sparks of heavenlie beautie fired.
But Amaryllis, whether fortunate
Or else unfortunate may I aread, 565
That freed is from Cupids yoke by fate,
Since which she doth new bands adventure dread,—
Shepheard, what ever thou hast heard to be
In this or that praysd diversly apart,
In her thou maist them all assembled see, 570
And seald up in the threasurie of her hart.
Ne thee lesse worthie, gentle Flavia,
For thy chaste life and vertue I esteeme:
Ne thee lesse worthie, curteous Candida,
For thy true love and loyaltie I deeme. 575

Besides yet many mo that Cynthia serve,
 Right noble Nymphs, and high to be commended :
 But, if I all should praise as they deserve,
 This sun would faile me ere I halfe had ended.
 Therefore, in closure of a thankfull mynd, 580
 I deeme it best to hold eternally
 Their bounteous deeds and noble favours shrynd,
 Then by discourse them to indignifie."

So having said, Aglaura him bespake :

"Colin, well worthie were those goodly favours 585
 Bestowed on thee, that so of them doest make,
 And them requitest with thy thankfull labours.
 But of great Cynthiaes goodnesse, and high grace,
 Finish the storie which thou hast begunne."

"More eath¹ (quoth he) it is in such a case 590
 How to begin, then know how to have donne.
 For everie gift, and everie goodly meed,
 Which she on me bestowed, demaunds a day ;
 And everie day, in which she did a deed,
 Demaunds a yeare it duly to display. 595
 Her words were like a streame of honny fleeting,
 The which doth softly trickle from the hive :
 Hable to melt the hearers heart unweeting,²
 And eke to make the dead againe alive.
 Her deeds were like great clusters of ripe grapes, 600
 Which load the bunches of the fruitfull vine ;

¹ *Eath*, easy.

² *Unweeting*, unconsciously.

Offring to fall into each mouth that gapes,
 And fill the same with store of timely wine.
 Her lookes were like beames of the morning sun,
 Forth looking through the windowes of the east, 605
 When first the fleecie cattell have begun
 Upon the perled grasse to make their feast.
 Her thoughts are like the fume of franckincence,
 Which from a golden censer forth doth rise,
 And throwing forth sweet odours mounts fro thence 610
 In rolling globes up to the vanted¹ skies.
 There she beholds, with high aspiring thought,
 The cradle of her owne creation,
 Emongst the seats of angels heavenly wrought,
 Much like an angell in all forme and fashion.” 615

“Colin, (said Cuddy then,) thou hast forgot
 Thy selfe, me seemes, too much, to mount so hie:
 Such loftie flight base² shepheard seemeth not,
 From flocks and fields, to angels and to skie.”

“True, (answered he,) but her great excellencye 620
 Lifts me above the measure of my might:
 That, being fild with furious insolence,
 I feele my selfe like one yrapt in spright.³
 For when I thinke of her, as oft I ought,
 Then want I words to speake it fitly forth : 625
 And, when I speake of her what I have thought,

¹ *Vaulted*, vaulted.

² *Base*, humble.

³ *Yrapt in spright*, rapt in spirit.

I cannot thinke according to her worth.
Yet will I thinke of her, yet will I speake,
So long as life my limbs doth hold together;
And, when as death these vitall bands shall breake, 630
Her name recorded I will leave for ever.
Her name in every tree I will endosse,¹
That, as the trees do grow, her name may grow:
And in the ground each where will it engrosse,
And fill with stones, that all men may it know. 635
The speaking woods, and murmuring waters fall,
Her name Ile teach in knownen termes to frame:
And eke my lambs, when for their dams they call,
Ile teach to call for Cynthia by name.
And, long while after I am dead and rotten, 640
Amongst the shepheards daughters dancing rownd,
My layes made of her shall not be forgotten,
But sung by them with flowry gyrlonds crownd.
And ye, who so ye be, that shall survive,
When as ye heare her memory renewed, 645
Be witnesse of her bountie here alive,
Which she to Colin her poore shepheard shewed."
Much was the whole assembly of those heards
Moov'd at his speech, so feelingly he spake:
And stood awhile astonisht at his words, 650
Till Thestylis at last their silence brake,
Saying; "Why Colin, since thou foundst such grace

¹ *Endosse*, write on the back, engrave.

With Cynthia and all her noble crew;
 Why didst thou ever leave that happie place,
 In which such wealth might unto thee accrue; 655
 And back returnedst to this barrein soyle,
 Where cold and care and penury do dwell,
 Here to keep sheepe, with hunger and with toyle?
 Most wretched he, that is and cannot tell."

"Happie indeed (said Colin) I him hold, 660
 That may that blessed presence still enjoy,
 Of fortune and of envy uncomptrold,
 Which still are wont most happie states t' annoy:
 But I, by that which little while I prooved,
 Some part of those enormities did see, 665
 The which in court continually hooved,¹
 And followed those which happie seemed to bee.
 Therefore I, silly man, whose former dayes
 Had in rude fields bene altogether spent,
 Durst not adventure such unknownen wayes, 670
 Nor trust the guile of fortunes blandishment;
 But rather chose back to my sheep to tourne,
 Whose utmost hardnesse I before had tryde,
 Then, having learnt repentance late, to mourne
 Emongst those wretches which I there descryde." 675

"Shepheard, (said Thestylis,) it seemes of spight,
 Thou speakest thus against their felicitie,
 Which thou enviest, rather then of right

¹ *Hooved*, hovered.

That ought in them blameworthie thou doest spie."

"Cause have I none (quoth he) of cancerd will 680
 To quite¹ them ill, that me demeand² so well:
 But selfe-regard of private good or ill
 Moves me of each, so as I found, to tell
 And eke to warne yong shepheards wandring wit,
 Which, through report of that lives painted blisse, 685
 Abandon quiet home, to seeke for it,
 And leave their lambes to losse misled amisse.
 For, sooth³ to say, it is no sort of life,
 For shepheard fit to lead in that same place,
 Where each one seeks with malice, and with strife, 690
 To thrust downe other into foule disgrace,
 Himselfe to raise: and he doth soonest rise .
 That best can handle his deceitfull wit
 In subtil shifts, and finest sleights devise,
 Either by slaundring his well deemed name, 695
 Through leasings lewd,⁴ and fained forgerie;
 Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
 By creeping close into his secrecie;
 To which him needs a guilefull hollow hart,
 Masked with faire dissembling curtesie, 700
 A filed⁵ toun furnisht with tearmes of art,
 No art of schoole, but courtiers schoolery.
 For arts of schoole have there small countenance,

¹ *Quite*, requite. ² *Demeand*, treated. ³ *Sooth*, truth.

⁴ *Leasings lewd*, wicked falsehoods. ⁵ *Filed*, smooth, artful.

Counted but toyes to busie ydle braines ;
And there professours find small maintenance, 705
But to be instruments of others gaines.
Ne is there place for any gentle wit,
Unlesse, to please, it selfe it can applie ;
But sholdred is, or out of doore quite shit,
As base, or blunt, unmeet for melodie. 710
For each mans worth is measured by his weed,¹
As harts by hornes, or asses by their eares :
Yet asses been not all whose eares exceed,
Nor yet all harts that hornes the highest beares.
For highest looks have not the highest mynd, 715
Nor haughtie words most full of highest thoughts :
But are like bladders blowen up with wynd,
That being prickt do vanish into nougts.
Even such is all their vaunted vanitie,
Nought else but smoke, that fumeth soone away : 720
Such is their glorie that in simple eie
Seeme greatest, when their garments are most gay.
So they themselves for praise of fooles do sell,
And all their wealth for painting on a wall ;
With price whereof they buy a golden bell, 725
And purchase highest rowmes in bowre and hall :
Whiles single Truth and simple Honestie
Do wander up and downe despys'd of all ;
Their plaine attire such glorious gallantry

¹ *Weed*, dress.

Disdaines so much, that none them in doth call." 730

" Ah ! Colin, (then said Hobbinol,) the blame
 Which thou imputest, is too generall,
 As if not any gentle wit of name
 Nor honest mynd might there be found at all.
 For well I wot,¹ sith² I my selfe was there, 735
 To wait on Lobbin, (Lobbin well thou knewest,)
 Full many worthie ones then waiting were,
 As ever else in princes court thou vewest.
 Of which, among you many yet remaine,
 Whose names I cannot readily now ghesse : 740
 Those that poore Sutors papers do retaine,
 And those that skill of medicine professe,
 And those that do to Cynthia expound
 The ledden³ of straunge languages in charge :
 For Cynthia doth in sciences abound, 745
 And gives to their professors stipends large.
 Therefore uniustly thou doest wyte⁴ them all,
 For that which thou dislikedst in a few."

" Blame is (quoth he) more blamelesse generall,
 Then that which private errours doth pursew ; 750
 For well I wot,¹ that there amongst them bee
 Full many persons of right worthie parts,
 Both for report of spotlesse honestie,
 And for profession of all learned arts,

¹ *Wot*, know.

³ *Ledden*, dialect.

² *Sith*, since.

⁴ *Wyte*, blame.

Whose praise hereby no whit impaired is,
 Though blame do light on those that faultie bee;
 For all the rest do most-what¹ far amis,
 And yet their owne misfaring² will not see:
 For either they be puffed up with pride,
 Or fraught with envie that their galls do swell,
 Or they their dayes to ydlenesse divide,
 Or drownded die in pleasures wastefull well,
 In which like moldwarps³ nousling⁴ still they lurke,
 Unmindfull of chiefe parts of manlinesse;
 And do themselves, for want of other worke,
 Vaine votaries of laesie⁵ Love professe,
 Whose service high so basely they ensew,
 That Cupid selfe of them ashamed is,
 And, mustring all his men in Venus vew,
 Denies them quite for servitors of his."

" And is love then (said Corylas) once knowne
 In Court, and his sweet lore professed there?
 I weened sure he was our god alone,
 And only woond⁶ in fields and forests here:"

" Not so, (quoth he,) Love most aboundeth there. 775
 For all the walls and windows there are writ,
 All full of love, and love, and love my deare,
 And all their talke and studie is of it.
 Ne any there doth brave or valiant seeme,

¹ *Most-what*, generally.

³ *Moldwarps*, moles.

⁵ *Laesie*, lazy.

² *Misfaring*, evil-doing.

⁴ *Noulsing*, burrowing.

⁶ *Woond*, dwelt.

Unlesse that some gay Mistresse badge he beares :
 Ne any one himselfe doth ought esteeme,
 Unlesse he swim in love up to the eares.
 But they of Love, and of his sacred lere,¹
 (As it should be,) all otherwise devise,
 Then we poore shepheards are accustomd here,
 And him do sue and serve all otherwise.
 For with lewd² speeches, and licentious deeds,
 His mightie mysteries they do prophane,
 And use his ydle name to other needs,
 But as a complement for courting vaine.
 So him they do not serve as they professe,
 But make him serve to them for sordid uses :
 Ah ! my dread Lord, that doest liege hearts possesse,
 Avenge thy selfe on them for their abuses.
 But we poore shepheards whether rightly so,
 Or through our rudenesse into errour led,
 Do make religion how we rashly go
 To serve that god, that is so greatly dred³ ;
 For him the greatest of the gods we deeme,
 Borne without syre or couples of one kynd ;
 For Venus selfe doth soly⁴ couples seeme,
 Both male and female through commixture ioynd :
 So pure and spotlesse Cupid forth she brought,
 And in the Gardens of Adonis nurst :

¹ *Lere*, lore.³ *Dred*, dreaded.² *Lewd*, evil.⁴ *Soly*, solely.

Where growing he his owne perfection wrought,
 And shortly was of all the gods the first.
 Then got he bow and shafts of gold and lead,
 In which so fell and puissant he grew,
 That Love himselfe his powre began to dread,
 And, taking up to heaven, him godded¹ new.
 From thence he shoothes his arrowes every where
 Into the world, at random as he will,
 On us fraile men, his wretched vassals here,
 Like as himselfe us pleaseth save or spill.²
 So we him worship, so we him adore
 With humble hearts to heaven uplifted hie,
 That to true loves he may us evermore
 Preferre, and of their grace us dignifie:
 Ne is there shepheard, ne yet shepheards swaine,
 What ever feeds in forest or in field,
 That dare with evil deed or leasing³ vaine
 Blaspheme his powre, or ternes unworthie yield."

"Shepheard, it seemes that some celestiall rage
 Of love (quoth Cuddy) is breath'd into thy brest,
 That powreth forth these oracles so sage
 Of that high powre, wherewith thou art possest.
 But never wist⁴ I till this present day,
 Albe⁵ of Love I alwayes humbly deemed,

¹ *Godded*, made a god.

³ *Leasing*, falsehood.

² *Spill*, spoil.

⁴ *Wist*, knew.

⁵ *Albe*, although.

That he was such an one, as thou dost say,
And so religiously to be esteemed.

Well may it seeme, by this thy deep insight,
That of that god the priest thou shouldest bee;
So well thou wot'st¹ the mysterie of his might,
As if his godhead thou didst present see."

" Of Loves perfection perfectly to speake,
Or of his nature rightly to define,
Indeed (said Colin) passeth reasons reach,
And needs his priest t' expresse his powre divine.
For long before the world he was ybore,²
And bred above in Venus bosome deare:
For by his powre the world was made of yore,
And all that therein wondrous doth appeare.
For how should else things so far from attone,³
And so great enemies as of them bee,
Be ever drawne together into one,
And taught in such accordance to agree?
Through him the cold began to covet heat,
And water fire; the light to mount on hie,
And th' heavie downe to peize⁴; the hungry t' eat,
And voydnesse to seek full satietie.
So, being former foes, they waxed friends,
And gan by little learne to love each other:
So, being knit, they brought forth other kynds

¹ *Wot'st*, knowest.

³ *Attone*, at one, in harmony.

² *Ybore*, born.

⁴ *Peize*, poise, weigh.

Out of the fruitfull wombe of their great mother.
Then first gan heaven out of darknesse dread
For to appeare, and brought forth chearfull day:
Next gan the earth to shew her naked head,
Out of deep waters which her drownd alway:
And, shortly after, everie living wight
Crept forth like wormes out of her slimie nature.
Soone as on them the suns life-giving light
Had powred kindly heat and formall feature,
Thenceforth they gan each one his like to love,
And like himselfe desire for to beget:
The lyon chose his mate, the turtle dove
Her deare, the dolphin his owne dolphinet;
But man, that had the sparke of reasons might
More then the rest to rule his passion,
Chose for his love the fairest in his sight,
Like as himselfe was fairest by creation:
For Beautie is the bayt which with delight
Doth man allure for to enlarge his kynd;
Beautie, the burning lamp of heavens light,
Darting her beames into each feeble mynd:
Against whose powre, nor God nor man can fynd
Defence, ne ward the daunger of the wound;
But, being hurt, seeke to be medicynd
Of her that first did stir that mortall stownd.¹
Then do they cry and call to Love apace,

¹ *Stownd*, attack.

With praiers loud importuning the skie,
 Whence he them heares ; and, when he list shew grace
 Does graunt them grace that otherwise would die.
 So Love is lord of all the world by right,
 And rules their creatures by his powerfull saw¹ ;
 All being made the vassals of his might,
 Through secret sence which therto doth them draw.
 Thus ought all lovers of their lord to deeme ;
 And with chaste heart to honor him alway :
 But who so else doth otherwise esteeme,
 Are outlawes, and his lore do disobay.
 For their desire is base, and doth not merit
 The name of love, but of disloyal lust :
 Ne mongst true lovers they shall place inherit,
 But as exuls² out of his court be thrust."

So having said, Melissa spake at will ;
 "Colin, thou now full deeply hast divynd
 Of Love and Beautie ; and, with wondrous skill,
 Hast Cupid selfe depainted in his kynd.
 To thee are all true lovers greatly bound,
 That doest their cause so mightily defend ;
 But most, all wemen are thy debtors found,
 That doest their bountie still so much commend."
 "That ill (said Hobbinol) they him requite,
 For having loved ever one most deare :
 He is repayd with scorne and foule despite,

¹ *Saw*, sentence, decree.

² *Exuls*, exiles.

That yrkes¹ each gentle heart which it doth heare.”

“Indeed (said Lucid) I have often heard
 Fair Rosalind of divers fowly blamed
 For being to that swaine too cruell hard ;
 That her bright glorie else hath much defamed.
 But who can tell wh.t cause had that faire Mayd
 Tn use him so that used her so well ;
 Or who with blame can iustly her upbrayd,
 For loving not? for who can love compell ?
 And, sooth² to say, it is foolhardie thing,
 Rashly to wyten³ creatures so divine ;
 For demigods they be, and first did spring
 From heaven, though graft in frailnesse feminine.
 And well I wote,⁴ that oft I heard it spoken,
 How one, that fairest Helene did revile,
 Through iudgment of the gods to been ywroken,⁵
 Lost both his eyes, and so remaynd long while,
 Till he recanted had his wicked rimes,
 And made amends to her with treble praise.
 Beware therefore, ye gromes, I read⁶ betimes,
 How rashly blame of Rosalind ye raise.”

“ Ah ! shepheards, (then said Colin,) ye ne weet⁷
 How great a guilt upon your heads ye draw,
 To make so bold a doome, with words unmeet,

¹ *Yrkes*, grieves. ² *Sooth*, truth. ³ *Wyten*, blame.

⁴ *Wote*, know. ⁵ *Ywroken*, avenged, punished. ⁶ *Read*, advise.

⁷ *Weet*, know.

Of thing celestiall which ye never saw.
For she is not like as the other crew
Of shepheards daughteres which emongst you bee,
But of divine regard and heavenly hew,
Excelling all that ever ye did see.
Not then to her that scorned thing so base,
But to my selfe the blame that lookt so hie :
So hie her thoughts as she her selfe have place,
And loath each lowly thing with loftie eie.
Yet so much grace let her vouchsafe to grant
To simple swaine, sith¹ her I may not love :
Yet that I may her honour paravant,²
And praise her worth, though far my wit above.
Such grace shall be some guerdon for the grieve,
And long affliction which I have endured :
Such grace sometimes shall give me some relieve,
And ease of paine which cannot be recured.
And ye, my fellow shepheards, which do see
And hear the languours of my too long dying,
Unto the world for ever witnesse bee,
That hers I die, nought to the world denying,
This simple trophe³ of her great conquest."—
So, having ended, he from ground did rise ;
And after him uprose eke all the rest.
All loth to part, but that the glooming skies
Warnd them to draw their bleating flocks to rest.

¹ *Sith*, since.

² *Paravant*, publicly.

³ *Trophe*, trophy.

CHAPTER II.

WE remark, first, that by shepherds, in this poem, we are to understand Shepherds of Arcadia; and these again are honest men, and sometimes poets, who are supposed to be true to Nature, their sovereign mistress. Their so-called “oaten pipe,” is a figure for their musical or harmonious spirits, which are supposed to be attuned to one universal harmony, by which they harmonize with each other, and are thus classed together as “peers,” line 5 of the poem. But, although thus classed together, they manifest every diversity, as among each other, just as we know the poets of Spenser’s age did at the time when, in the character of Colin Clouts, the poet represents himself as accosted by one whom he calls a groom, “hight” Hobbinol (line 15), with a request to detail his adventures during a certain journey, telling him how sad a time his absence had given his friends, during which (line 23):

The woods were heard to wail full many a time,
And all the birds with silence to complain.
The fields with faded flowers did seem to mourn,
And all the flocks from feeding to refrain.

The running waters even wept for his return,
&c.

The writer of these remarks is led to suppose that the touching beauty of this lament does not lie in the mere fact that some shepherds have been moved to this mode of expressing their grief for the temporary absence of a companion, but he sees in these lines the peculiar grief which marks a poet's sense of deprivation, when what is called the spirit has been withdrawn. He is reminded by these lines of the 97th Sonnet of Shakespeare :

“ How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year !
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen !
What old December's barenness everywhere !
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time—

* * * * *

For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute ;

Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near."

This expresses the grief of the poet for the absence of the Arcadian Beauty; and this is the sense of the lines in Spenser where Colin, for the purposes of the poet, represents the spirit of Arcadia itself.

Nothing is more common among the poets than these expressions of deep grief at periods when the poetic inspiration is withdrawn; and this is true also of certain religious temperaments, as may be seen in the life of Payson and others. Geo. Herbert is an example of both, being a religious poet. He is perpetually lamenting the absence of the Spirit, meaning the Spirit of Christ. A poem in his works entitled "A Parodie," begins thus:

"Souls joy, when thou art gone
And I alone,
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me,
And I depend on thee ;

Yet when thou dost suppress
The cheerfulness
Of thy abode,

[meaning his soul]

And in my powers not stir abroad,
But leave me to my load :

O what a damp and shade
Doth me invade !
No stormy night
Can so afflict, or so affright,
As thy eclipsed light."

The writer did not intend to run into these comparisons, and yet they furnish materials for serious psychological study; for it is not at all beyond the limits of the possible, but that Herbert and Spenser had a vision of the same (Arcadian) land, though under some unimportant varying accompaniments; and if we could discover a definite object in the poet of the Canticles, we might make an important discovery touching some of the most wonderful and fascinating experiences in life.

But we must return from this digression.

Colin, that is, the poet, being invited, as we have said, to give an account of his journey, which we insist was a journey to Arcadia, or the poet's paradise, professes himself very willing to yield assent (line 37, &c.), declaring how happy his journey had

made him ; for, says he, referring to the queen of the country he had visited (line 40, &c.) :

Since I saw that angel's blessed eye,
Her world's bright sun, her heaven's fairest light,
My mind, full of my thoughts' satietie,
Doth feed on sweet contentment of that sight :
No feeling have in any earthly pleasure,
But in remembrance of that glory bright,
My life's sole bliss, my heart's eternal treasure.

Spenser's 35th Sonnet, and Shakespeare's 109th and 112th Sonnets, are written in the same vein.

The poet now commences his story (line 56), by giving an account, to be understood as mystical, of his having been seated at the *foot* of a certain mount, which he calls Mole ; and, while there seated, playing, as he tells us, upon his *oaten reed*, he was visited by a “strange shepherd” (line 60).

Here we must draw slightly upon the reader's concessions ; for we understand by this “strange shepherd” what we must for the present call—and we pray the reader not to be startled—this strange shepherd we must call, we say, the Spirit of Truth ; or if the reader chooses to imagine an intervening

visitant, he may be likened to the Orphan Boy in the story of the Red Book of Appin.

He calls himself the Shepherd of the Ocean (line 66), in answer to a question by Colin; and the Ocean referred to is the great Ocean of Life, out of which there comes to some favored mortals, from time to time, a certain spirit, here personified as a Strange Shepherd.

The reader is now expected to notice that the HONEST shepherd has drawn to himself, as it were, a SENSE of the great harmony with whom, or with which, as the reader pleases, a spirit-friendship is formed. The unity of the two in spirit is poetically discovered and described in the lines from 68 to 79 :

*

He piped, [says Colin,] I sung;
And when he sung, I piped,
Neither envying the other nor envied.

In one word, the HONEST man has discovered a principle in himself, the nature of which becomes so far disclosed as to bring to the shepherd a profound conviction of its similitude to the true good in life, and this produces in the mind of the man a

certain *impulse* which, personified, is represented as an invitation to leave the “waste” into which he had been led by his association, as we shall soon see, with a stream, the Bregog by name.

But Cuddy steps in (line 81), and asks Colin the burden of the song which had attracted the strange shepherd; and that, it appears, “referred” to the river Bregog, just named (line 92)—and here we must anticipate the story so far as to say, that the river Bregog signifies the *false*, as the poem will presently show us; and we must observe further, that, in the story about to be told by Colin, there are two streams, described as at the foot of Old Mole, one named the “Mulla,” and the other this “*false*” river Bregog.

These two streams figure the *true* and the *false* in life. We shall not err if we consider them as representing in the nature of MAN—his nature partaking of both—God and the world: they are called in Scripture God and Balaam, and man is required to “choose” which he will follow, as in Joshua xxiv. 15. They are likewise called life and death, between which man is also required to choose, as in Deut. xxx. 19.

It must be noticed, that when Colin consents to

tell the burden of his song, he warns his hearers (line 103) that he is about to tell

No leasing [or lying] new, nor grandame's fable stale,
But ancient Truth, confirmed with credence old.

Then follows the introductory story, from line 104 to 155, which should be looked at with care; for it is a mystical account of the birth of man, substantially according to the “ancient Truth” in Genesis. We say substantially; because it is not pretended that the poet has attempted to adhere literally to the ancient record, as that would not have answered the Hermetic purpose of the figurative version in the poem.

The expression “Old Mole” is clearly figurative, and has several significations, according to the conditions or requirements of the poem. It is a figure for Nature as the mother of all things, and figures also the father, who becomes visible in a mystic sense in the mother.

OLD MOLE,

we see, had a daughter “fresh as flower of May” (line 106); and this is a figure for life—fresh young life—compared to a river, the Mulla.

She is called a Nymph, and is said to give her name to the “pleasant vale” at the foot of Old Mole; and the vale is said to be “pleasant,” to indicate a characteristic of the morning of life.

But this stream is described as running to a city (line 113) called Kilnemullah,

Whose ragged ruins breed great ruth and pity
To travellers, which it from far behold.

The city of Kilnemullah and its “ragged and pitiable” condition indicates the fate or destination of multitudes who turn aside from “the strait and narrow way” into the broad road, which the Scripture tells us “leadeth to destruction.”

The poet tells us that Old Mole (in line 120 called the Old Sire), originally designed to match the nymph with Allo or Broadwater, for which he wrought so well, it appears, that the match was decided upon :

The *dower* agreed, the *day* assigned plaine,
The *place* appointed where it should be done.

In these lines the Allo, or Broadwater, signifies the universal life, to which individual life-streams, in the providence of God, were destined, the union being compared to a marriage, as it is in Scripture.

The “dower” referred to (line 125), is *eternal life*; the “day” for entrance upon it, is the day of death; and the “place” for the final consummation of the design of the Old Sire, is the other world.

We next come to the causes of the unhappy fate of so many whose lives run to the city of Kilnemul-lah, where the ragged and desolate ruins are seen.

The poet tells us (line 116) that the beautiful Nymph, hight [or called] Mulla,

— loved and was beloved full faine
Of her own brother river, Bregog hight,—

so called, as we are now told, because of the deceit

Which he with Mulla wrought to win delight.

It may seem a strange flight of fancy, except to a poet, to represent two rivers as loving each other; but the figure will be readily recognized when we see that one of the rivers represents, as we have said, the true, and the other the false; and that they are called sister and brother; by which it will be understood that the two streams figure but one life, in which two principles are contained, familiarly called good and evil, sometimes soul and body, and, in symbolical language, sister and brother.

This part of the story is now soon told ; for we see that evil assails the good, or, in other words, courts and persuades it even to the point of bringing about what is called a “wedding” (line 131) ; by which we are to understand that our mother Eve is here represented as fatally eating the apple : for, we repeat, we are reading, as the poet warns us (line 103), not a modern lie, but an ancient truth. The curious reader may find this intimated in Shakespeare’s 144th Sonnet :

“ Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still :
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour’d ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.”

By the Allo, or Broadwater (line 123), we are to understand, as just stated, the great ocean of life, to which the Mulla was originally destined, and would have happily reached, had not the Nymph, unfortunately, been carried into Babylonish captivity by the false, the “wily” Bregog (line 137) ; which

doubtless had the very nature of the Serpent in the original story.

The arts of this enemy of mankind are characteristically described (line 136, &c.). He first divides into many streams, according to the nature of the false, unity being the principle and property of the true ; and then, these false streams are described as running “under ground”—it being the property of the false to hate the light.

Thus matters stand until a certain *sense of honesty*, called a shepherd’s *boy* (line 147) brings to the knowledge of Old Mole, who is in truth the man, the microcosm of the story, in whom all this life is dramatically represented, the character of the unfortunate marriage of the true with the false ; whereupon Old Mole is described as rolling down “great stones,” (that is, solid principles,) by which the false is destroyed—this being its proper destiny.

This story, the reader must notice, is represented as having been told by Colin (himself the representative man in the story), to the Strange Shepherd ; and when the character of this shepherd comes to be understood, as it will be in the development of the poem, it will be seen that the story of Colin has the nature of a confession—a true confession—upon which

account the Strange Shepherd is said to be attracted to the simple but *honest* Colin.

Through this confession the two shepherds—two in appearance, though in fact there is but one—discover their intimate relation to each other ; or, in other words, by means of this honest confession, Colin himself discovers something of the *nature* of truth, and of its similitude, as a principle developed in himself, to a certain principle of Truth recognized as the Spirit of universal life.

This sense of the unity of Truth in Colin himself with the Spirit of Truth, is, in short, here personified as the *Strange* Shepherd, so called, because it is a new, or unaccustomed sense of Truth in a supreme degree.

Colin now determines to “ follow ” this indication, as John follows the Lamb in the Gospel : for we must keep in mind that we are reading an “ ancient truth.”

The poet gives us the story in a dramatic form, and for his purpose, we say, he personifies the Spirit of Truth as a Strange Shepherd, coming from the great Ocean (of life) ; and assigns to him a special office, that of inviting Colin to leave the “ waste ” (or desert, as Isaiah calls it) into which his “ evil com-

munications" had led him, and that of persuading the sufferer to go with him to see his queen.

This queen we name with some hesitation, because of the insufficiency of the words to represent her; but for our purposes we may call her Truth itself, or Truth and Reason, if the reader chooses, for the two will be found together bathing in the mystic love-bath; and this queen is also the Queen of the Fortunate Isle, in the poem of Borderie.

As we intend to deal openly with this Hermetic poem, we say that this invitation to leave the "waste" (line 183), is simply at first an *impulse* in the man himself, the real subject of the story, and makes itself felt as an "authoritative conscience," as this same subject is presented in the letter of Wilhelm to Natalia, in the first chapter of Meister's Travels.

Here we have what, in Scripture, is compared to a mustard-seed, said to be the smallest of seeds; but its character in Colin Clouts must be determined by the offices attributed to the Strange Shepherd. At proper periods in the development of the story it will be seen, that he first invites Colin to leave the "waste" into which an evil life had led him (l. 183).

To wend with him his Cynthia to see.

He is then the guide in the ship to the *isle* (or spirit-land) floating amid the sea (of life, line 273). After reaching the isle, he continues to be the guide to the presence of Cynthia (line 332,) and introduces Colin, or the man who is the real subject of the story, to the Goddess, “enhancing” him in her “grace” (line 359); and above all, we see (lines 454–5) that the Queen accepts the man, not on account of his own “skill,” or merit, but solely on account of the merit of the Strange Shepherd :

Yet found I liking [or acceptance, as the poet means] in her
royal mind,
Not for my skill, but for that shepherd’s sake.

These, with other indications, show very clearly that, by the Strange Shepherd, the poet has designedly personified the Immanuel of Scripture, and in the poem itself has given us the doctrine of Christianity, the spirit of which is older than its records, having, in truth, the perpetual youth and summer which some poets understand, and so reverentially write about, as a “lovely boy,” whose mother is the Virgin-Queen, the mystic “Lady” of so many religious writers.

There is a recognized truth of nature in that part of the poem which represents the Strange Shepherd as complaining of the

Great unkindnesse, and of the usage hard
Of Cynthia the Ladie of the Sea,

(line 165) : for, we must understand, as we repeat, that we are not, in fact, reading of two *persons*, but rather of one *nature*, in which or in whom a sense of present suffering is not always accompanied with a sense of wilful disobedience, while the evil is nevertheless a suggesting truth. Hence, while the man suffers, he may not altogether feel the suffering as just. He is therefore represented as complaining of the “Ladie of the Sea.” But the result of his contemplations, which are represented as a sort of dialogue between two, and this again as an exercise upon their “pipes” (line 178), is the *impulse*, as we call it, to follow the Strange Shepherd, under the sense of his representing the better life, where the man is induced to hope for what may be called the higher life ; and this, in truth, is the very principle of good, in the divine nature, which is thus *drawing* the man to Himself (John vi. 44).

The hopes of the higher life take the form of the

persuasions recorded in lines 187, &c., to which we must see that the man is partly inclined by his sense of the “waste” into which he had been led (line 183). Through this channel the man comes to understand the angel-like character of suffering itself, as an instrument of good.

It is an argument in proof of Christianity when we see that its records admit the inference of a certain Spirit, called in John’s Gospel the Spirit of Truth (John xvi. 13), which may then be represented in a purely symbolical form, as in Colin Clouts, from which, again, the same Spirit may be reproduced with features clearly represented in the Gospels. While this process exhibits the unity of the Spirit, it demonstrates, at the same time, its universality and independence; for, as seen from this point of view, the truth must be recognized as having no relation to time, and is therefore eternal.

Those who require a more immediate appropriation or possession of it, while in the body, are referred to Luke ix. 24, for the answer of the Gospel.

It is important to keep in mind here, that Colin’s introduction to the Queen, and his advancement into her “grace,” is due to the Strange Shepherd, line

358; and that, finally, his acceptance is secured solely by his merits, as we have already said,—this important fact being stated in the poem, lines 454, 455.

We do not propose to go much further into detail, but will make a few running comments upon the poem, in explanation of what may appear to be obscure to the general reader.

The ship is represented as bringing into view first one island and then another, as if sailing to the west (line 271), discovering the second from the first. The second island is described as being guarded by “mighty white rocks,” which protect it against

The seas encroaching cruetie.

The critics see in this reference to white rocks a clear allusion to England, with its well-known white cliffs; and this has doubtless assisted in making the interpretation acceptable, by which the poem is thought to have been an account of a visit to the English Court, according to a note already recited. But let us look at this matter a little more closely.

The ship, we are told, reaches the first island,

moving westwardly. By the geographical position of England with respect to Ireland, this first discovered island (if England and Ireland were intended), should have been described with the well-known chalky cliffs of Dover. But this is not according to the poem. In the first land seen, moving to the west, nothing is said of white rocks; while, from this first discovered land, another island is seen, significantly described (line 273) as

Floating amid the sea in jeopardie,

and this second island is that which is described as being girt

Round about with mighty white rocks,

as if to guard it

Against the seas encroaching crueltie.

What, now, are these two islands, assuredly not answering, in the description of them, to England and Ireland; for, besides that the second and not the first has the white rocks, in what respect can either of them be said to be in “jeopardy,” exposed to the sea’s “cruelty?”

We shall understand this better by considering

that the poem figures a man in the body, in search of the true life under the guidance of a mysterious Shepherd, who figures the Spirit of Truth. Or, the reader may the more readily understand the purpose of this poem by considering the ship as the figure of man in the body in search of the true life, under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, having been “born of the Spirit,” according to John iii. 8; for the man is represented as having received the Strange Shepherd, or Spirit of Truth, from—he knows not whence; and he follows it—he knows not whither, bound to it only by what may be considered faith—faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in the Spirit of Truth. The first *island* discovered, is that principle which by some is called the soul, regarded by the ancients under the name of Demiurgus, as the fabricating principle of the body; an opinion of some moderns also—Swedenborg, for example. This is not the principle of life itself, though first discovered in the consciousness in what may be called the journey of life.

We are only here pointing out what appears to have been the theory in the mind of the poet, without assuming to authorize or defend it. Nor do we intend or desire to assail it, as such a purpose is

not within the scope we have proposed in these remarks.

The first island being discovered, the second becomes visible (spiritually); and this is designed to figure the spirit itself, which we see is represented (line 273) as floating (like the Spirit of Truth) in the *midst* of the ocean (of life). This is the island which the poet wishes us to see, as being exposed to the “sea’s crueltie,”—a figure for the world, in respect to truth. But he intimates, nevertheless, that this sacred island is guarded by “mighty white rocks;” that is, by wonderfully mysterious principles, figured by *rocks*, to indicate their strength, and said to be *white*, to indicate their purity; for God has not committed the injustice of leaving His child defenceless in the sea of life. The star which the wise men saw has been and still is under Almighty protection, and this is what the poet intends to teach; only we must concede to him the liberty of a poetic treatment of the subject. And now we may observe that the man has reached Cynthia’s land (line 289); that is, he is in Arcadia, or in the Isle of Borderie’s poem, said to be “full of good things.”

But Cuddy, or the every-day, careless reader, knowing little or nothing of this land, asks Colin:

What land is that thou meanest,
And is there other than this whereon we stand ?

To whom the poet answers nearly in the language of Hamlet after having seen his father's ghost :

Ah, Cuddy, thou art a fon [a fool],
That hast not seen the least part of Nature's work ;
For that same land¹ is much larger than this :

And this may very well be admitted, when we are quite unable to conceive any limits to it. And then Cuddy asks also as to the heaven of the land ; and is answered (line 308, &c.), almost in the language of the poet of the Fortunate Isle :

Both heaven and heavenly graces do much more
(Quoth he) abound in that same land than this.
For there all happy peace and plenteous store
Conspire in one to make contented bliss :
No wailing there, nor wretchedness is heard,
No bloody issues nor no leprosies,
No grisly famine, nor no raging sword,
No nightly bodrags² nor no hue and cries ;
The shepherds there abroad safely lie,
On hills and downs, withouten dread or danger :

¹ The Spirit-land, or Arcadia.

² Raiding

No ravenous wolves the good man's hope destroy,
No outlaws fell affright the forest ranger.
There learned arts do flourish in great honor,
And poets' wits are had in peerless price :
Religion hath lay power to rest upon her,
Advancing virtue and suppressing vice.
For end [or, finally], all good, all grace, there freely grows,
Had people grace it gratefully to use ;
For God his gifts there plenteously bestows,
But graceless men them greatly do abuse.

After reading this description, it is easy to judge how far the condition of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth may be supposed to have been in the eye of the poet, who must rather be supposed to have had in view the "Fortunate Isle," which is said to be

" Full of good things ; fruits and trees
And pleasant verdure ; a very master-piece
Of Nature's ; where the men immortally
Live, following all delights and pleasures."

If the reader still has any doubt on the subject, let him mark the description of the Queen, the Arcadian Queen, beginning at line 330 :

Forth on our voyage we by land did pass,
(Quoth he) as that same shepherd still us guided.

The reader should by no means lose sight of the statement that the man continues upon the journey under the guidance of that same Strange Shepherd, by whom he was first persuaded to leave the “waste” or desert where the two shepherds met each other, which surely was the figurative Egypt:

Forth on our voyage we by land did pass,
As that same shepherd still us guided,
Until we to Cynthia's presence came :
Whose glory, greater than my simple thought,
I found much greater than the former fame ;
Such greatness I cannot compare to aught ;
But if I her like aught on earth might read,
I would liken her to a crown of lilies,
Upon a virgin bride's adorned head,
With roses dight, and goolds and daffodillies ;
Or like the circlet of a turtle true
In which all colours of the rainbow be ;
Or like Phœbe's garland shining new,
In which all pure perfection one may see.
But vain it is to think, by paragone
Of earthly things, to judge of things divine :
Her power, her mercy, and her wisdom, none
Can deem, but who the Godhead can define.
Why then do I, base shepherd, bold and blind,
Presume the things so sacred to profane ?
More fit it is t' adore, with humble mind,
The image of the heavens in shape humane.

CHAPTER III.

WE regard it as a mistake to teach that man passes suddenly from a conformity with, not to say a love of, the world, to the fruition of the opposite state, that of devotion to truth and goodness. The impulse to undertake a divine life is doubtless instantaneous, and is often compared to the discovery of a light, as if seen from dense woods in which the man has been lost. This light, or the discovery of it, may be figured as a mustard-seed, the seed of a new life; but the end is not yet. The seeker, on the contrary, may have a long and often a weary road of research to travel; and we take this occasion to say that, in the case of Colin, that is, of Spenser, the poet of the Faerie Queen, that research is represented in the Amoretti Sonnets, which were not addressed, as generally supposed, to a particular lady, whom Spenser is said to have subsequently married. When those Sonnets begin to be under-

stood, the absurdity of treating them as love-sonnets, in the popular sense of the expression, will become very apparent. They are indeed love-sonnets, and are properly named according to the theory of the time; but the *object* of the love is the mystical divinity of the poets, as we may show at another time. We merely observe now, that the poet does not, at the outset, understand definitely the object he is in search of. He is impelled, by a sort of divine faith in the Strange Shepherd, to seek the mystic queen, as represented in Colin Clouts, in lines 192, &c.:

So what with hope of good and hate of ill,
He me persuaded forth with him to fare.

That the man takes with him, in following the Strange Shepherd, only his “oaten quill” (line 194), contains an important hint, that the search after the true life is something peculiarly individual; for, in one word, in the presence of God every soul ultimately becomes its own judge of itself, through its own spirit, which in this poem is figured by the *oaten quill*; and it is so figured because the soul is in some sort a musical instrument, which only needs to be properly tuned, or attuned to the divine har-

mony, to find itself in unison with the Spirit of Truth, the Strange Shepherd of the poem.

We lose much of the truth and beauty of the Psalms when we think of King David as actually seated at a harp. It is possible, indeed, that a King may have some skill in the mechanical use of an actual musical instrument; but this would be of little importance in the case of David, or in our thought of him, if we did not understand that his soul was his real harp, in such wise as that the expressions, "awake my harp," and "awake my spirit," signify the same thing.

The "sea" upon which Colin is about to set forth is the Sea of Life, where the waters are said
(line 197)

* * * to be heaped up on high,
Rolling like mountains in wide wilderness,
Horrible, hideous, and roaring with hoarse cry.

To see the force of this similitude may require an experience of some years in the world, for Byron tells us that we know nothing of it while "youth's hot blood runs in our veins." Hence it comes that youth is well represented (line 216), as a ship of

wooden frame and frail,
Glewed together with some subtle matter,
yet fitted up with

arms and wings and head and tail,
And life to move itself upon the water:
Strange thing! how bold and swift the monster is,
That cares not for wind, nor hail, nor rain,
Nor swelling waves, but through them did pass
So proudly that she made them roar again.

Such, indeed, is a fair description of the frail but proud barque in which every soul sets out upon the journey of life, freighted with a heavenly treasure, exposed to numberless accidents; for the ship is said (line 202) to encounter wild beasts

with deep mouths gaping direful
In wait poor passengers to tear.

The poet has well described the natural man in early life (line 220) as bold and fearless; though this proceeds from an ignorance of danger, and not from courage derived from an insight into the responsibilities of life, or a knowledge of what are often called the shoals and quicksands of life, which is poetically called a sea.

The ship, that is, the man, is represented as losing sight of the land, “our mother” (line 226), which may be understood as nature-land, (or the natural man,) being now under the guidance of the Strange Shepherd, who is leading the man to another and a better life; and this better life must be understood as the *Arcadia*. It is to be reached only by means of a certain guide, who is described in a mystical book, quite out of print or circulation, as having a most singular nature. He is expressly called a guide, and the mystic writer says:

“ You must know how to please him, that he may be the more willing to go along with you in the right way, and not leave you as he hath done some, nor mislead you as he hath done others, when they have attempted this journey with fair success in the knowledge of matters requisite—have notwithstanding fatally erred,—not knowing how to please their guide who hath a humor of his own not to be equalled in the world; and if you make him either sullen or choleric, you may as well give over the enterprise. First of all, then, know that for his part he is a very stupid fool; there is none more simple among all his brethren; yet he is most faithful to his Lord, and doth all things for him

most prudently, ordering all things in the family very discreetly ;—which I may rather ascribe to a natural instinct, than to any quickness of parts. He is very faithful; for which cause he will never either ask or answer any question, but goes on his way silently ; nor will he ever go before you, but follow, [in this particular answering exactly to the *Daemon* of Socrates.] By his countenance you shall know whether he be pleased or displeased ; therefore lay bonds on him; that is, shut him close where he may not get forth : then go before with *heat* [i. e. with life or spirit], and be ever watchful of his countenance as he follows: his anger you shall know by redness in his countenance ; and his sullenness by his lumpish behavior: and so you shall pass forward, or turn, or go back, as you see his countenance and temper inclined.”

Here we have a description of the mysterious visitor, called a Strange Shepherd, who came to “Colin” from the “main-sea deep” (line 67), who, though speechless, is dramatically represented as talking with Colin, though, in truth, he speaks only *in him*: and if the reader does not by this time understand who this personage is, it is to be feared he may not very soon become acquainted with the

queen in whose service he is, for here the queen is his “Lord” no less.

The reader can surely now judge how far the description of Queen Cynthia can with any propriety be applied to the “Vixen Queen” of England, as described by Mrs. Jameson in her *Loves of the Poets*. It is impossible to discover the smallest resemblance, the difference being beyond all the liberty which the greatest license can allow the most subservient poet, however much disposed to flatter and exalt the maiden queen, who was more than sufficiently honored by Shakespeare when he permitted her to walk in “maiden meditation, fancy free.”

Mrs. Jameson, after stating, indeed, that there was something extremely poetical in the situation of Elizabeth as a maiden queen, raised from a prison to a throne, says that “for the woman herself, as a woman, with her pedantry and her absurd affection, her masculine temper and coarse insolence, her sharp, shrewish, cat-like face, and her pretension to beauty, it is impossible to conceive anything more anti-poetical.” And she disposes of this queen by telling us of her dying, “at last, on her palace-floor, like a crushed wasp, sick of her own very selfishness ; torpid, sullen, despairing ;

without one friend near her, without one heart in the wide world attached to her by affection or gratitude."

Who can see any likeness in this picture to that of Queen Cynthia in the poem of Spenser?

What stupidity is this which encumbers this sweet pastoral with notes, gravely setting forth the opinion, as if it could not be controverted, that it was designed to give an account of a visit of the poet to the Court of England, and of his introduction to Queen Elizabeth; when, too, especially, we see him exhausting the power of language (line 590, &c.), in speaking of the benefits conferred upon him by the queen, whilst we know from history that Spenser, of all men, has described most vividly the horrors of a life spent in hopeless attendance upon the English Court, whence he derived no benefit worth acknowledging.¹ What has become of the taste of critics, retrospective reviews, &c., when such perversions are not at once discomfited

¹ In Mother Hubbard's Tale, Spenser records his estimate of what he received at Court:

"Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is in suing long to bide," &c.

and thrust ignominiously out of the Arcadian land of beauty and poesy? Perhaps we ought to say, indeed, that they are banished from the true Arcadia, which was by no means the English Court in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: and now we will proceed with our remarks.

While the poet is in the spirit-land, as Swedenborg says of himself when in what he calls the spiritual world, he is not out of himself; but he sees, on the contrary, from his spiritual elevation, the actual poets of his day, whom he briefly characterizes from line 381, calling them shepherds

In the faithful service of fair Cynthia.

This signifies that poets, however far short they come of a true sense of the art, must be considered, nevertheless, as aiming at the highest; and this is to do honor to Cynthia, the symbol of the highest,—very much as we must say, unless blinded by bigotry, that all religionists aim to honor God in their religious services. God is the idea, or the object, of the religious affection, though obscured, it may be, by intervening clouds of the imagina-

tion, working through that “muddy vesture of decay” which Shakespeare calls, in the 44th Sonnet, the “dull substance of the flesh.”

It is remarkable that, in Spenser’s commendations of the poets of his day, while he eulogizes Daniell by name, we catch no allusion to the greatest uninspired bard that ever appeared on earth, and who was then living. It is possible that, when Colin Clouts was written, Shakespeare had not made himself known as a poet. Spenser is expressly named by Shakespeare in the 8th Sonnet of the *Passionate Pilgrim*, as having “so deep a conceit as passed all conceit;” and he was undoubtedly alluded to in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 86, in the 13th line of which we see a reference to the success of Spenser in exhibiting in his poems, perhaps in this very poem of Colin Clouts, what Shakespeare calls the “countenance” of their common love, that of Queen Cynthia; for, in the land of Arcadia the Queen is no less a King,—as may be seen in the poem under examination.

It is remarkable, also, that the high praise given to the work of a poet said to have had the name of Alabaster, does not appear to have been sufficient

to bring the poem into light from its hiding-place among the MSS. of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

We observe next, that while the poet sees the veritable poets of his day, he figures by women the higher principles of spiritual life—the muses and the graces; though not by their usual names, except that he begins with *Urania*, or heaven itself (line 487), said to be the sister of Astrofell. And here the reader must consider that all spiritual principles, as making a perfect harmony, are of one accord, and are each entitled to the same honor. Hence, besides *Urania*,

In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,
All heavenly gifts and riches locked are,
More rich than pearls of Inde, or gold of Opher,
And *in her sex* more wonderful and rare,

there are *Theana* and many more, to whom the poet says in each case “no less” honor is due. It is not without a purpose that, while the differences among the poets, their jealousies and rivalries, are fully recorded and brought into view (line 665), the women are represented as “no less praiseworthy” than the best; for in Arcadia they are all good

alike, all being equally in the service of Queen Cynthia, whose court is Urania, or heaven itself.

The reference to the jealousies and rivalries of the poets in Arcadia must explain the reason why Colin left that sweet place, and came "home again." In the first place, the poet, when in Arcadia, as we have already said, is not out of himself, and lives, while in the body, under the laws of physical life in common with others whose contentions disturb the peace of what otherwise would be a realization of the poet's vision. This is what is said to have brought him back again to earth.

In line 613 we fall upon the expression, "the cradle of her own creation," upon which the Queen is said to look with "high aspiring thought." What "creation" is this, but that of the poet himself, *as a poet*, seeing himself in Arcadia, from whence, his lofty dome of thought, he is supposed to look down upon his own bright creations?—for the poet's creations have a kind of life in them, and are often seen in their entirety during whole years, without being written, and without losing a word of their unity.

A genuine poet often sees his poetic creation, very much as a mathematician sees his problem,

with its complete demonstration in its totality ; and when a poem is thus seen in the spirit-light, it is what a poet has called a “ thing of beauty,” and is said to be a “ joy forever.”

Colin’s praises of the women finally leads Aglaura (line 584), to ask for a more distinct account of the favors bestowed upon the poet by the Queen herself, which brings an answer, from line 590 ; and this is so much beyond the conception of Cuddy that he thinks Colin quite beside himself. But Colin interposes, in his defence :

True [says he], but her great excellency
Lifts me above the measure of my might ;
That, being filled with furious insolence,
I feel myself like one yraft in spright.
For when I think of her, as oft I ought,
Then want I words to speak it fitly forth :
And when I speak of her what I have thought,
I cannot think according to her worth.
Yet will I think of her, yet will I speake,
So long as life my limbs doth hold together ;
And when as death these vital bands shall breake,
Her name recorded I will leave forever.

This is what all, or nearly all, of the poets say, Daniel, Carew, Drayton, Cowley ; and above all

Shakespeare himself, as may be seen in numerous Sonnets, 18, 19, 55, 60, 63, 65, 74, 81, 100, 101, 107. The reader may find the same prediction of immortality in Spenser's Sonnets, 27, 69, and 75.

The poets, writing in the belief that their inspiration is from an eternal fountain, readily fall into the delusion that their poems will live forever, Ovid himself making this prediction for his own poems.

Hence Colin, that is, Spenser, says (line 640) :

Long while after I am dead and rotten,
Amongst the shepherds' daughters dancing round,
My lays MADE OF HER shall not be forgotten,
But sung by them with flowery garlands crowned.

The lays *made of her* signify the poems made of nature, or under the direct inspiration of nature, as seen in the poet's Arcadia, where there is one principle of truth and beauty recognized and honored as the Queen under the name of Cynthia.

This is the Queen whom Drayton goes in "quest of," amidst trees and flowers, with melodious birds to lead him on, until he finally discovers her, and finds himself accepted, when he concludes :

"By Cynthia thus do I subsist,
On earth heaven's only pride ,

Let her be mine, and let who list
Take all the world beside."

This is, in truth, the burthen of Spenser's first Amoretti Sonnet, addressed, not to any particular lady, but to the Queen of Arcadia, the mystical object of the entire series.

"Leaves, lines and rhymes [says he] seek her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for others none."

Happy rhymes! said the poet, "bathed in the sacred brook of Helicon, *whence she derived is*,"—the lady addressed being the poetic queen—called in Shakespeare's Sonnets the "beautiful mother" (Sonnet 3) of a "lovely boy" (Sonnet 108), whose approbation alone he sought (Sonnet 112), absolutely insensible to "critic and to flatterer."

But this sort of study is called by Colin (line 703) the "arts of school," which are said to have, in the world,

and are small countenance,

counted as but toys to busy idle brains.

This has resulted perhaps not so much from the

study itself, as from the meagre results manifested in so many, who have wasted their lives in fruitless efforts, where the Strange Shepherd has not been fallen in with; or, when discovered—and this is far worse—has not been duly obeyed.

The chief causes, however, of the low estimate in the world of what Spenser calls the Arts of School, meaning true learning, are, first, the absence of a taste for it; as, in the case of music, a taste being wanting, all effort at learning is necessarily a labor without commensurate progress; and, secondly, arts are valued in the world chiefly for their material products, as instruments of gain (line 706); or, as the poet tells us (line 711), the worth of man is measured by his “weed,” that is, by his *outside*.

As harts by horns and asses by their ears.

But the true poet, or artist, sees the value of his art principally in the art itself, very much as a devotee regards his faith, and prizes it far beyond anything which money can purchase, or which, what is contemptuously called worldly dross can measure; while we see it intimated that true art is accessible to its true “Lover” without money and

without price, but under the condition of acknowledging it as the gift of God.

We must not omit to say, in this notice, that whereas Shakespeare, in his 20th Sonnet, has indicated the object of his love as of a double nature, or two natures in one, in Colin Clouts we encounter the same description in lines from 799, where the object is said to have been

Born without sire, or couples of one kind;
For, Venus self¹ doth soly couples seeme,
Both male and female through commixture joined:
So pure and spotless Cupid forth she brought,
And in the gardens of Adonis nurst:
Where growing he his own perfection wrought,
And shortly was of all the gods the first.

This high power the poets are careful never to blaspheme (line 822); and we see this doctrine in Shakespeare's Sonnets 57, 58, 88, 89, 95, 96, 150, &c.

A still more exalted character is given to the object by Colin (line 839), where we read:

¹ And this is only another name for the Arcadian Queen Cynthia.

Long before the world he was ybore,
And bred above in Venus' bosom dear :

and then, as if to leave the reader in no doubt as to his meaning, the poet adds:

For by his power the world was made of yore ;

and is not this what John says of the Word ?—the same John who tells us that God is Love, a word which thence became a synonym for religion with a large class of mystical writers, especially poets, including Spenser, whose Amoretti Sonnets were not addressed to a lady of flesh and blood, whatever the critics may say to the contrary.

At length Melissa breaks in (line 896), exclaiming :

Colin, thou now full deeply hast divined
Of Love and Beauty ; and with wondrous skill
Hast Cupid self depainted in his kind.

But enough has been said to show the purpose of this poem of Colin Clouts Come Home Again. It signifies, first, a visit by the poet to the poet's ideal land, the poetic Arcadia, or nature as seen in the spirit, or in what Swedenborg calls a celestial idea,

to which ordinary mortals have no ready access; and then, secondly, by his Coming Home Again is to be understood his coming down to ordinary life, to give us a poetic description of what he *saw* in the spiritual world, using this expression metaphorically; for the eye hath not seen nor hath the ear heard what is said and done in the Arcadian Land.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON THE AMORETTI, OR SONNETS OF SPENSER.

HAVING explained the meaning and purpose of Colin Clouts Come Home Again, we think it necessary to express the opinion we entertain of the Sonnets of Spenser, which, like those of Shakespeare, we regard as hermetic studies.

We desire to confess that the field of inquiry has grown considerably under the view of the writer since he first undertook to explain the purpose of the small poem just named. Indeed, it has grown so much that he feels the necessity of using some violence in the effort to bring his remarks to a close.

We have said that Spenser, in Colin Clouts, has presented, in a hermetic poem, his view of a Christian life—the life of a man led by the Spirit

of Christ ; and that he figures the rewards of such a life by what he says of the “land” of Cynthia and its Queen.

We feel called upon to point out what we think of the Amoretti Sonnets, because we regard them as having an intimate relation to what is set forth in the poem ; for, in the Sonnets, we recognize the contemplative studies of the poet on the profoundest problems of life, disclosed, or, if the reader chooses, concealed, in hermetic writing—the form of writing used in both Colin Clouts and the Amoretti.

We say that the Sonnets of Spenser were not addressed to any particular person, but, like those of Shakespeare and of many of the poets in the early stages of English poetry, they enclose the speculative opinions of their writers upon nature and life.

Referring to the remarks on the Sonnets of Shakespeare, we repeat that several of the poets of the earlier ages of English poesy, following precedents as old as Grecian literature (see Shakespeare’s Sonnet 108), were essentially students of Nature, shrouding their inquiries and speculations, so far as they made them known at all, in a mystical style of writing, such as we now see in the Sonnets left us by many of the poets prior to the time of

Dryden. After the Reformation had become an acknowledged fact, that style of writing appears, for the most part, to have been abandoned. The most extensive series of sonnets recently published are those of Wordsworth; but there is nothing mystical in them. Prior to Wordsworth's time, one great cause of mysterious writing had been in a great degree removed, for men were no longer burned at the stake for their opinions.

In Spenser's time, and prior to it, the Reformers, or those who sought to live above the superstitions of the time, resorted to hermetic writings; and the poets, for the most part, adopted the sonnet as the vehicle of their opinions and speculations, Chaucer and some others, however, using poems in the form of tales and *dreams*. In the main, whatever special opinions they attained, the practice was almost universal of using *personifications* in expressing them; and as Nature, in the eye of a poet, is anything but a mere inert mass of dead matter—being rather “the glorious image of the Maker’s beauty” (Amoretti, 61)—they usually set forward, as the figure for their sense of the Beautiful, the most beautiful object in Nature; and that is, confessedly, on all hands, a beautiful woman.

As the Beautiful is seen in Nature, and as the most beautiful object in nature is a beautiful woman, many of the older poets have, we say, professed to have *seen* in woman that beauty and perfection which they *conceived* in the spirit, and have honored it with a devotion which they felt was due to what Spenser calls the FIRST FAIR, which expresses an invisible sentiment or “idea” having no distinct or complete type in any one visible thing in the universe, and which, indeed, the poets themselves treat as irrepresentable by mere imagery; for the eye never sees it, nor does the ear hear it.

Many of the hermetic poets have given us intimations of the true object of their poetic worship; but mostly in the form of poems addressed to some lady, in which, without doubt, there has been in many instances a real, visible object, though seen under the “heightening influence of the ideal.” Hence the pertinacity with which writers insist upon the *reality* of a *Beatrice*, a *Laura*, a *Fiammetta*, &c., though they are staggered when they fall in with the “Lovely Boy” of Shakespeare’s Sonnets, and waste a world of labor in efforts to show what particular historical person may answer to the said boy; when the very absurdity, not to say monstros-

ity, immediately apparent from a literal interpretation, ought to suggest a rule, well understood by St. Augustine and others, that when any one encounters what is visibly absurd or monstrous in a writing, the writing is either worthless, or should be interpreted from some other than a literal ground.

With regard to Spenser, a reasonable critic may consider the question as having been settled by and for himself in his Hymns, where it is certain he enforces, in the strongest terms, his faith in the reality of the unseen Beauty, the Lady of his Sonnets, and the Cynthia of Colin Clouts. We pass over much argument on the subject, and recite from the Hymns :

“ How vainly then do idle wits invent
That Beauty is nought else but mixture made
Of colors fair, and goodly temp’rament,
Of pure complexions, that shall quickly fade
And pass away, like to a summer’s shade ;
Or that it is but comely composition
Of parts well measured, with meet disposition !

* * * * *

But ah ! believe me, there is more than so,
That works such wonders in the minds of men.

* * * * *

For that same goodly hue of white and red,
With which the cheeks are sprinkled, shall decay,
And those sweet rosy leaves, so fairly spread
Upon the lips, shall fade and fall away
To that they were, even to corrupted clay.

* * * * *

But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds which *kindleth lovers' fire*,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay;
But, when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native planet shall retire ;
For it is heavenly-born, and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky."

This opinion is expressed in several ways in the Amoretti: it is intimated in the first Sonnet, 10th line, where the poet assigns Helicon as the birth-place of his Lady; it is referred to in the 15th Sonnet, line 13, as being what "few behold;" it is stated in Sonnet 55, line 10, in direct terms, &c.

The point left for debate as to Spenser's theory (which, like that of Sidney and many others, is Platonic), is as to the *initial* or suggesting condition under which the heavenly love takes its origin; and here there may be a doubt, if not settled by the 78th Sonnet, as to whether it must be beauty in a woman,

or may be the Beautiful in some other object, or in some scene in nature, the evening or morning star, the rising or setting sun, or possibly a simple flower, as Wordsworth saw it in a “primrose.” Whatever may be the suggesting cause, the IDEA itself is supposed to transcend time and the visible, and stands before the poet’s mind a living reality :

“ For *lovers’ eyes* [says the poet] more sharply sighted be
Than other men’s, and in dear love’s delight
See more than any other eyes can see,
Through mutual receipt of beams bright,
Which carry privie message to the spright,
And to their eyes that *inmost fair display*,
As plain as light discovers dawning day.

* * * * *

In which how many wonders do they read
To their conceipt, that others never see !

* * * * *

Then, Io triumph ! O great Beauty’s Queen,
Advance the banner of thy conquest high,
That all this world, the which thy vassals been,
May draw to thee, and with due fealty
Adore the power of thy great majesty,
Singing this hymn in honor of thy name,
Compiled by me, which thy poor liegeman am.”¹

¹ See Colin Clouts, line 640, &c.

In the use of the expression *lover's eyes*, we may inquire whether the poet means the eyes of two human lovers, male and female, or refers to *lovers* in the poetic sense, meaning those who are capable of receiving the sentiment (or idea) from anything in nature, not because of the dogma that God is, and may be seen, in all things, for this dogma itself rests on the fact that some men do thus see God (His Spirit or Beauty) in all things.

The point appears to be, that Spenser, and others of his class, see *something* as the Beautiful, which they figure as a lady; and then seek *its* smiles and favor in language somewhat assimilated to ordinary courtship, while the object itself is conceived to be invisible and eternal—characteristics of what is universally admitted to be divine.

Hermetic poets have labored under extreme difficulties in their efforts to avoid startling their readers by direct statements which, being liable to be misunderstood, are exposed to come into conflict with some tenet of traditional faith. Thus, what between the difficulty of the subject and a well-intentioned respect for what are felt, nevertheless, to be prejudices of education, the oldest and purest faith in the

world is left either to be trampled upon or to be resuscitated from a most artificial and figurative dress or presentation, by a sort of happy accident, which is itself held under strict bonds of secrecy by the solemn assertion that a discovery can only be made through the special gift of God.

Nature, it is true, contains one secret by no means easily discovered when it has once been obscured; but the poets throw over that secret an almost impenetrable covering of words, figures, and symbols, making the task of discovery infinitely more difficult than Nature left it; not, indeed, the best of the poets, whose representations are so completely artistic, that the sense is never perverted to positively mischievous ends, though the reader may miss the true sense.

In the poem we have had under examination the true sense may be missed by many; but it is an offence only against taste--we mean literary taste. It is merely a sort of childish mistake to imagine that Colin Clouts was designed in any manner to refer to Queen Elizabeth, and does no visible injury in the world.

In reading the Amoretti, we see many signs of

their mystical and secret character, and something even of the cause of the poet's resort to that species of writing.

In the 84th Sonnet he says :

The world that cannot deem of worthy things,
When I do praise her, say I do but flatter ;
So does the cuckoo, when the mavis sings,
Begin his witness note apace to clatter.

But they that skill not of so heavenly matter,
All that they know not, envy or admire ;
Rather than envy, let them wonder at her,
But not to deem of her desert aspire.

Deep, in the closet of my parts entire,
Her worth is written with a golden quill,
That me with heavenly fury doth inspire,
And my glad mouth with her sweet praises fill.

Which when as Fame in her shrill trump shall thunder,
Let the world choose to envy or to wonder.

This particular Sonnet, it is quite true, might have been composed in view of some lady, whom the world thought excessively praised ; but the judgment to be passed upon it, and upon several special Sonnets, must follow a general opinion, to be drawn from a consideration of the purpose of other Sonnets making up the entire collection, whose character

must be determined as a whole, to which a few seemingly exceptional Sonnets must submit, provided only that no positive violence be done the sense.

We see, in this 84th Sonnet, that Spenser discredited the judgment of the “world” upon the character of the *object* addressed in his Sonnets; and this may be considered as among the causes of his hermetic writing. He knew that the world would not appreciate his opinions on the Divine Beauty, which was only seen by what the poet calls (Sonnet 87) the “contemplation of his purest part,” the “Beauty” of his love being, as he calls it, “pure, immortal, high,” which, as he tells us in the 1st Sonnet, descended upon him from Helicon, and which he calls his “soul’s long-lacked food—his heaven’s bliss.”

In allusions of this character, in connection with what we have cited from the Hymns, and in keeping with the very plain doctrine of the poem of Colin Clouts in honor of Queen Cynthia, we must be very unwilling to be convinced, or we must see that Spenser’s Love was not a woman, except as she was the image of an immortal Beauty which claimed all of his devotion, but which was of such a nature

that he knew the world in general would not understand if he wrote openly about it; hence it was, as we see the problem, that the poet decided to write mystically about his “secret”—his secret love. The poet was in the condition of one who feels the need of utterance, and yet despairs of finding an intelligent audience in the public, while he knew there were some individuals to whose secret soul his lovesonnets would be acceptable in their real sense. The poet was in this state when he wrote the 43d Sonnet, which discloses his purpose of writing in secret, that is, in hermetic symbolism, which should be obscure to the world in general, but would be understood by those who belonged to the class called lovers, as in Shakespeare’s 55th Sonnet—meaning lovers of the Divine Beauty, figured by so many poets as a lady, though seen also in man.

We recite here the 43d Sonnet :

Shall I then silent be, or shall I speak ?
And, if I speak, *her wrath renew I shall* ;
And, if I silent be, my heart will break,
Or choked be with overflowing gall.

Here we see the wish of the poet to relieve his soul by expression, and yet clearly see the struggle

or conflict growing out of the natural desire for relief, and the apprehension of contests with the world, which the poet figures as *the wrath of his lady*; for we are now, in this very Sonnet, in the midst of hermetic writing. The wrath of the lady is a mere figure for the apprehended wrath of the world in case he should undertake to write openly about what he knew the world, in his day, would not appreciate.

He proceeds :

What tyranny is this, both my heart to thrall,
And eke my tongue with proud restraint to tie ;
That neither I may speak nor think at all,
But like a stupid stock in silence die !

But now we come to the resolve of the poet :

Yet I my heart *with silence secretly*
Will teach to speak, and my just cause to plead ;
And eke mine eyes, with meek humility,
Love-learned letters to her eyes to read ;
Which her deep wit, that true heart's thought can spell,
Will soon conceive, and learn to construe well.

In this Sonnet we see distinctly the purpose of the poet to write amoretti, or love-sonnets, which he

calls *love-learned letters*, and which he expected would be understood by a certain class of *spirituelle* friends, who would have what are called by many of the poets lover's eyes, or eyes which look beyond the letter to what St. Paul calls the spirit.

A curious reader may ask why Spenser and others resorted to this mode of writing, properly called hermetic; and, if there was reason for secrecy in his day, why any attempt should now be made to raise the veil. If an answer to the first part of the question is not seen in the 43d Sonnet, in the allusion to the "wrath" of the lady, let the reader consider the state of the times prior to and during the progress of the Reformation, and he must soon understand that, while some were willing, as martyrs, to encounter the intolerance of the times, there must have been others who, and for many reasons which might be named, would easily fall into some understood forms of expression, by which they could communicate with each other and yet leave the *woman* undisturbed; for the woman was the public, having a visible and an invisible side, exactly in harmony with the doctrine which gave two sides to Nature, a visible and an invisible side; on the one side of which the lovers saw their mistress as "cruel" and as "treach-

erous," &c., while, as seen within, the same mistress was known to be true and perfect.

With respect to raising the veil, it is sufficient to say that the cause of the secrecy being no longer in force, it is, to say the least, an interesting question to discover, if we can, what the ingenious men of the age thought, and see also, if we can, how they expressed themselves on the great problems of life.

Although the author of these remarks has every confidence in the correctness of his explanations, he would be among the last to claim infallibility. He is absolutely convinced, perhaps on theoretic grounds (it may be thought), that, in the very nature of things, there must be a positive ground of reference by which mystic writings may be interpreted; but whilst this is admitted, it is conceded, at the same time, that a knowledge of that ground may be what some writers, speaking in a philosophical sense, call inadequate. Adequate knowledge, as distinguished from the inadequate, is that of the reason as distinguished from that of the senses. Genuine hermetic writers trace adequate knowledge to Reason, as being absolute.

It is only in virtue that there is *something* abso-

lute—that anything whatever can be conceived as absolutely true; from which it comes that the true and the absolute must be seen together: and criticism itself, even in its subordinate character, is only possible on the assumption of the true; that is, the assumption of there being what may be called absolute truth.

All men are instinctively agreed upon the principle, that there is such truth: they only differ as to what it is, and where to seek for it.

Certainly, one principle should be admitted by all seekers; to wit, that Truth cannot be contrary to itself: and as the evidence of truth must itself have the nature of truth to be valid, it must follow that truth and its evidence will be found self-supporting.

We feel justified in saying that, if the author is in error in his explanation of Colin Clouts and the Sonnets of Spenser, he can only be shown to be so by an appeal to truth in a higher sense than he understands it; and in that case he has but this to say—that he is ready to accept that higher sense from any one who will assist him to it.

CHAPTER V.

THE most direct method of making our opinion of the Amoretti Sonnets acceptable would be to name and define the object addressed, so as to hold it distinctly before the imagination of the reader. But this is not possible, because the real object, though visible in some sense, as the world itself is visible, is nevertheless invisible in fact, as is what is called the spirit of the world ; or if we substitute the word Nature for the world, as just used, we shall express the same thing. In the main, we say that the hermetic poets were students of nature and worshippers of its spirit, the object being, to the imagination, double, and thence called in the Shakespeare Sonnets (the 20th) the master-mistress of the poet's passion, or Love ; as it is also described, as we have pointed out, in Colin Clouts. The reader must readily see that the idea of the object, however conceived as a unity in one sense, must be complex before the

imagination ; and in general we may say it is figured as One, as Two, and as Three. This will easily be seen in the Sonnets, and we may as well point out some evidences at once. For this purpose we refer to the 13th Sonnet, where the Lady, the mystical object written about, is represented as having her *face* elevated to the sky, while her *eye-lids* are said to be on the ground. Who cannot see that this constrained position is unreal, and expresses simply the upper and the lower, or spirit and matter, as two of the three principles of the unity? But a third principle is represented as a “goodly temperature,” or in other words, the medium or “midst” principle of the Trinity. Thus :

13. In that proud port [or bearing], which *her* so goodly
graceth,

Whiles *her* fair face she rears up to the sky,
And to the ground her eye-lids low embaseth,
Most goodly temperature ye may descry ; &c.

Nothing is more common than to speak of what is called the bosom of nature ; and the 77th Sonnet, besides others, will show how this is referred to the mystic Lady.

77. Was it a dream, or did I see it plain ;
A goodly table of pure ivory,

All spread with juncats, fit to entertain
The greatest prince with pompous royalty :
Mongst which, there in a silver dish did lie
Two—[here we have a figure for two principles of the
Trinity, in themselves pure]—

Two golden apples of unvalued price ;

* * * *

Exceeding sweet, yet void of sinful vice.

* * * *

Her breast—that is, the bosom of Nature, figured
as a Lady]—

Her breast that table was, so richly spread ;
My thoughts the guests, which would thereon have fed.

In the Sonnet preceding this the bosom of Nature
is also addressed, as the fair bosom of the mystical
Lady.

76. Fair bosom ! fraught with virtue's richest treasure,
The nest of love, the lodging of delight,
The bower of bliss, the paradise of pleasure,
The sacred harbor of that heavenly spright ;
How was I ravished with your lovely sight,
And my frail thoughts too rashly led astray !
Whiles diving deep through amorous insight,
On the sweet spoil of beauty they did prey ;
And twixt her paps, (like early fruit in May,
Whose harvest seemed to hasten now apace,)
They loosely did their wanton wings display,

And there to rest themselves did boldly place.

Sweet thoughts! I envy your so happy rest,

Which oft I wished, yet never was so blessed.

Plainly, in this Sonnet, the poet is imagining a *rest* in the bosom of Nature, to which the Sonnets show he had not attained, but was still seeking; and though in the 63d Sonnet the poet lets us see that he had reached something like a glimpse of the true rest, which he calls “eternal bliss,” or *eternal life*—for this is what he meant—he did not enjoy the fruition of it beyond other mortals in the flesh, as we plainly see by the closing Sonnet, the 88th, in which he compares himself to a turtle-dove, mourning its fate, &c.

The reader may see a further reference to Nature in the 64th Sonnet, where the most sensuous personifications are used, as they are in the Canticles, which, in the opinion of the writer of these remarks, was addressed to the same object.

The entire absence from the poet’s mind of any actually sensuous ideas is sufficiently clear from the 83d Sonnet :

83. Let not one spark of filthy lustful fire
Break out, that may her sacred peace molest ;
No one light glance of sensual desire
Attempt to work her gentle mind’s unrest :

But pure affections bred in spotless breast,
And modest thoughts breathed from well-tempered
spirits,
Go visit her, in her chaste bower of rest, &c.

The “sacred peace” and the rest here intended is that of Nature in what has been well called her “animated repose;” and however beautiful as applied to lovely woman, it was here addressed to Nature, the object of the poet’s study.

There is quite a class of sonnets in which Lady Nature is figured in her double character as visible and invisible, and the poet bids us beware of the visible, meaning simply what are called the deceits and treacheries of the world.

In some cases the visible beauty of the world is intended, as in the 55th Sonnet :

So oft as I her beauty do behold—
meaning simply the beauty of Nature—

And therewith do her cruelty compare—
that is, so oft as the poet compares the treacheries of the world, its delusive hopes and severe trials, to the promises of life—

I marvel [says he] of what substance was the mould,
The which her made at once so cruel fair, &c.

Cruel Fair is a common expression for the Lady, meaning that Nature is exceedingly deceptive to the natural eye, and by no means allows its devotee through that channel to reach or understand her true beauties or glories. Thus, in the 53d Sonnet, the Lady is compared to a panther, with a deceptively beautiful spotted hide, or outside :

53. The panther, knowing that his spotted hide
Doth please all beasts, but that his looks them fray,
[or frighten,]
Within a bush his dreadful head doth hide,
To let them gaze, whilst he on them may prey:
Right so my cruel fair with me doth play ;
For, with the goodly semblance of her hue,
She doth allure me to mine own decay,
And then no mercy will unto me show.

Can any one suppose that this Sonnet was addressed by a reasonable lover to a lady sought in honorable marriage ? Certainly not. The panther figures the Lady, and the Lady figures Nature, the object of the poet's studies.

The 37th Sonnet gives us the very same doctrine under other figures :

37. What guile is this, that those her golden tresses
She doth attire under a net of gold ;

And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,
That which is gold or hair may scarce be told ?
Is it that men's frail eyes, [or intellects,] which gaze too
bold,
She may entangle in that golden snare ;
And, being caught, may craftily enfold
Their weaker hearts, which are not well aware ?
Take heed therefore, mine eyes, how ye do stare
Henceforth too rashly on that guileful net,
In which if ever ye entrapped are,
Out of her bands ye by no means shall get.
Fondness it were for any, being free,
To covet fetters though they golden be.

This is only throwing into verse the trite maxim, that all is not gold that glitters ; though we may explain further that the poet is, in the largest sense, giving a caution against the deceits of the world, by which so many lose their hopes of glory in a religious sense ; for these entire studies tend to the exaltation of the spirit over matter, or nature, as visible, while yet the doctrine was that, essentially, the two are one, or in harmony, and that man should seek his blessing, not by doing violence to nature, but by living in harmony with its eternal laws.

Another caution against the treachery of the visible may be seen in the 47th Sonnet :

47. Trust not the treason of those smiling looks,
Until ye have their guileful trains well tried :
For they are like but unto golden hooks,
That from the foolish fish their bates do hide ;
So she with flattering smiles—

These are the seductive and cheating smiles of what,
in popular discourse, is called the corrupt world—

So she with flattering smiles weak hearts doth guide—

Would this language be acceptable to any lady, de-
serving the name, or calculated to propitiate her
grace in behalf of a lover ?—

So she with flattering smiles weak hearts doth guide
Unto her love, and tempt to their decay ;
Whom, being caught, she kills with cruel pride,
And feeds at pleasure on the wretched prey.

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose
that this Sonnet was addressed to a lady of flesh
and blood. It was addressed to Lady Nature ; and
is followed, in the Sonnet, by the declaration of a
beautiful philosophy, by which we may see that the
poet understood the doctrine, which teaches the
beautifying influences of that perfect submission to
the law of nature, by which evils are transformed
into benefits, and even death into life.

O mighty charm ! [exclaims the poet,] which makes men love
their bane,
And think they die with pleasure, live with pain.

The 81st Sonnet may present some difficulties to a student unpractised in hermetic writings, but, like all the rest of the Sonnets, it must be read under a sense of the author's habitual personifications of Nature ; by which Nature, as a whole, is seen in all its parts, and is thus recognized as the Lady with golden hair, red cheeks, eyes of fire, and richly-laden breast or bosom, as we have already seen ; but, above all, she is astonishingly marvellous in what Plutarch calls, in the *Essay on Isis and Osiris*, her *Discourse*, or, in other words, in the power of speech. Nothing but habit makes us familiar with the wonders of nature and the spirit, and particularly with that wonderful faculty by which man is distinguished from all other animals, the faculty of speech ; and it is not strange that what is technically called the Word should be regarded as Divine.

A religious sentiment is strongly expressed in the 61st Sonnet—a sentiment which may be seen in all of this class of poets, from Chaucer down.

61. The glorious image of the Maker's beauty—

Here the poet addresses the world as the image of God. Do not those who profess to despise it, dishonor the Maker? The poets do not so; although, as we have seen, they figure its visible as a terrible panther, whose spotted hide is to be guarded against—

The glorious image of the Maker's beauty,
My sovereign saint, the idol of my thought,
Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of duty,
T' accuse of pride, or rashly blame for aught.
For being, as she is, divinely wrought,
And of the brood of Angels heavenly born;
And with the crew of blessed saints upbrought,
Each of which did her with their gifts adorn;
The bud of joy, the blossom of the morn,
The beam of light, whom mortal eyes admire;
What reason is it then but she should scorn
Base things, that to her love too bold aspire!
Such heavenly forms ought rather worshipped be,
Than dare be lov'd by men of mean degree.

The nearest expression of the theory of both Shakespeare and Spenser, so far as mere words can draw attention to it, as exhibited in the Sonnets, seems to be this: they each conceive a certain trinity, of which the three elements, so to say (admitting, however, that a mere written

creed is without life), are, first, the higher spirit, which is invisible; next, that which is visible, or can be known through the senses, and which is commonly called nature; and, lastly, man, as the microcosm, expressing the double being of spirit and matter, the latter represented in the body, the former in the soul.

By reading the 20th, 36th, 39th, 44th, and 74th of the Shakespeare Sonnets, the theory becomes tolerably clear.

We see a similar doctrine or theory in the Spenser Sonnets, particularly in the 45th Sonnet; to understand which we must see that the higher spirit is figured in what is called, in the Sonnet, the “glass of crystal clear.”

The Lady we must regard as nature personified; and now we see that the poet addresses Nature:

Leave, Lady! in your glass of crystal clean,
Your goodly self for evermore to view:
And in myself, my inward self, I mean,
Most lively like behold your semblant true.
Within my heart, though hardly it can show
Thing so divine to view of earthly eye,
The fair idea of your celestial hue
And every part remains immortally—

That is, the poet recognizes the eternal idea, or the idea of the eternal, in his own heart, which corresponds to the over-soul figured by the clean crystal glass; and nature, the personified object addressed, though here the microcosm is intended, is urged, as it were, to turn from contemplating herself in the over-soul, and see herself in the poet's soul, where the "celestial idea" remains immortally, and where the Lady might see herself, no less clearly than in the over-soul; but for a certain obstacle, called in Shakespeare's 44th Sonnet the "dull substance of the flesh"—which makes what is called the "separable spite" of the 36th Sonnet and "the addition" of the 20th Sonnet. The Sonnet continues:

And were it not that, through your cruelty,
With sorrow dimmed and deform'd it were,
The goodly image of your visnomy,
Clearer than crystal, would therein appear.

Here the poet refers to the work of *Nature* in him, as he considers, by which his spirit has been "dimmed and deform'd," as he calls it; and this, in his view, has operated to make what Shakespeare calls the "separable spite" in the 36th Sonnet, re-

ferring to the same dull substance of the flesh, meaning the nature-side of life.

And now, Spenser, as if he imputed this “separable spite” to his Lady, the personified nature, and not to the spirit, says :

But if yourself in me ye plain will see,
Remove the cause by which your fair beams darkened be.

That is, as Shakespeare might have said, Remove the dull substance of the flesh (Sonnet 44) which separates the inner spirit from the over-soul, when,

“despite of space I would be brought,
From limits far remote where thou dost stay.”

The principal difference in the view of the two poets lies in this : that Shakespeare studied to regard or understand Nature from the spirit-side, which he figured as a Lovely Boy or Sweet Boy, for he uses both expressions ; while Spenser, in his contemplation of Nature, had regard more particularly to what is often called the feminine side of life, and personifies it as a Lady : or, we may say that Shakespeare, though admirably harmonized, as we all know, in both the intellect and the affections, was less under the influence of the affections than

Spenser, who regarded nature principally through the affectional or feminine side of life. But both of the poets saw the woman in nature.

To appreciate the 88th Sonnet of the Amoretti, and other similar sonnets, the student must endeavor to enter into the feelings of the poet, not upon seeing a beautiful woman, as charming as such a vision is, but he should realize, if possible, a sense of Beauty in Nature—such as woman herself recognizes independently of man. A perfect man may indeed be the highest image of it to woman, as a perfect woman is that image to man.

This *invisibly visible* Beauty in Nature, called, by some, the *present-absent*, is that which fascinates so many poets—to be deprived of a sense of which creates so deep a feeling of loss, that it can be assimilated to nothing so well as winter as compared to summer—some of the poets going so far as to invoke death as a relief from the dreadful vacancy of the soul when not illumined by the Spirit of Beauty; for then the poet feels there is nothing in this wide world worth living for.

Thus, Shakespeare says, Sonnet 98, referring to this very privation, which he calls his absence from the object of his love:

“From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress’d in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh’d and leap’d with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me *any summer’s story tell*,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermillion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you,—you pattern of all those.
Yet seem’d it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.”

In this Sonnet the visible beauties of nature are treated as but the shadows of the Spirit of Beauty, whose absence from the poet’s soul turns April into December, as expressed in the 97th Sonnet also.

With some opinion like this let the 78th Sonnet of the Amoretti be read :

78. Lacking my love—

that is, lacking the sense of the beauty of which we speak—

I go from place to place,

Like a young fawn, that late hath lost the hind;

And seek each where, where last I saw her face,
Whose image yet I carry fresh in mind.

This “image” is the poet’s sense of the Beautiful, which he had realized in nature, whose impressions, being no stronger than a “flower” (Shakespeare’s Sonnet 65), cannot hold permanent possession of the man in the midst of the million sensuous influences constantly tending to distract him, and drive the ideal into nonentity—nonentity with respect to the man himself, though not with respect to nature; for in nature it is permanent, as beauty is said to be, under the figure of a lady, in Shelley’s Sensitive Plant.

I seek the fields—
continues Spenser—

with her late footing signed.

Here the poet uses the poet’s license. Having personified the object, he assumes the imprint or impression of her foot, as, in the 1st Sonnet, he talks of lily hands where there are no hands to be seen:

I seek the fields with her late footing signed ;
I seek her bower with her late presence decked ;

Yet nor in field nor bower I can her find ;

Yet field and bower are full of her aspect :

But when mine eyes I thereunto direct,

They idly back return to me again :

And when I hope to see their true object,

I find myself but fed with fancies vain.

Cease then, mine eyes, to seek herself to see ;

And let my thoughts behold herself in me.

The writer has no need to be told how a young and devoted lover comforts his heart and imagination by seeking the object of his affections in her private walks, feasting his eyes, it may be, upon a flower her lily hands may have touched, &c., &c. ; but he insists that this is more becoming a young man in the bloom of life and love, than to a *youth* of “forty,” the supposed age of Spenser when the Sonnets were written ; and he is sure that the beautiful realities of twenty naturally become, at forty, symbols for illustrating a sense of the permanent in spirit, of which the tender experiences are but the evanescent expressions or indications.

These experiences of life, however real to the sensuous nature of man, are but signs of a higher spirit, a higher nature, properly belonging to the island of which Cynthia is the queen, whose very

reality may be doubted, indeed, by the sensuous man ; but to the poet the ideal becomes the true real, in which the sensuous life is not lost, but becomes transformed, or transfigured, as we may say.

The 46th Sonnet requires special notice. It reads :

46. When my abode's prefixed time is spent,
My cruel fair straight bids me wend my way :
But then from heaven most hideous storms are sent,
As willing me against her will to stay.
Whom then shall I, or heaven or her, obey ?
The heavens know best what is the best for me :
But as she will, whose will my life doth sway,
My lower heaven, so it perforce must be.
But ye high heavens, that all this sorrow see,
Sith all your tempests cannot hold me back,
Assuage your storms ; or else both you, and she,
Will both together me too sorely wrack.
Enough it is for one man to sustain
The storms which she alone on me doth rain.

The argument or subject of this 46th Sonnet is substantially this :

When the poet shall have lived out the appointed period in this life, his “lower heaven,”

he figures his cruel fair, or personified Nature, as commanding him to go his “way” out of the world: but this command his soul is unwilling to obey, and is represented as opposing the command, and as crying out against it, in what the poet calls “hideous storms” (or passionate outcries). In plain words, the man shrinks from death.

Here is seen an opposition between the law of nature (the lady) and the man’s individual feelings or wishes, and the man asks which he shall “obey.” He admits that the higher spirit knows what is best for him; but sees clearly—and this must settle the point—that the question of death is entirely in the hands of Nature, that is, of the lady, his “cruel fair,” from which there is no appeal.

The poet then calls upon “high heavens” to interpose so far, since there is no power *to hold him back*, that the “storms” of his opposition to the behest of nature may be “assuaged,” lest, as he says, that both of them, the spirit and the lady, by bearing too heavily upon him, should make a “wreck” of him; pleading that

Enough it is for one man to sustain
The storms which she—

his lady, nature—

should on him rain.

In this, as in nearly all of the Amoretti Sonnets, nature is the lady, which, while she endowed the poet with all of his great “riches” or gifts, was at the same time regarded as the chief source of his *cruel* sorrows, and finally of his death; which was to proceed from an inexorable command or law against which “high heaven” had not restraining power.

That the reader may see the connection of the Amoretti with Colin Clouts, we cite here the 9th Sonnet:

Long-while I sought to what I might compare
Those powerful eyes, which lighten my dark spright:
Yet find I nought on earth to which I dare
Resemble th’ image of their goodly light :
Not to the sun ; for they do shine by night ;
Nor to the moon ; for they are changed never ;
Nor to the stars ; for they have purer sight ;
Nor to the fire ; for they consume not ever ;
Nor to the lightning ; for they still persever ;
Nor to the diamond ; for they are more tender ;
Nor unto crystal ; for nought may them sever ;
Nor unto glass ; such baseness might offend her.
Then to the Maker’s self they likest be,
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

A parallel to this Sonnet of Spenser's may be seen in Shakespeare's 18th Sonnet :

“ Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate :
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date :
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd ;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd ;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest ;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest :
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

As a parallel, again, for Shakespeare's Sonnets, to this promise of eternity secured by poetic labors, we cite Spenser's 69th Sonnet :

The famous warriors of the antique world
Us'd trophies to erect in stately wise ;
In which they would the records have enroll'd
Of their great deeds and valorous emprise.
What trophy then shall I most fit devise,
In which I may record the memory

Of my love's conquest, peerless beauty's prize,
Adorn'd with honor, love, and chastity !
Even this verse, vowed to eternity,
Shall be thereof immortal monument ;
And tell her praise to all posterity,
That may admire such world's rare wonderment ;
The happy purchase of my glorious spoil,
Gotten at last with labor and long toil.

The two poets loved the same lady, but without envy or rivalry.

By looking at the Sonnets from this point of view, we must soon understand that, in studying them, we have the most immediate access to the poet's actual thoughts of nature and the spirit; and in the study itself, in the cases of both Shakespeare and Spenser, and of some of the other poets, we are, as it were, holding converse with their spirits; while, on the other hand, to suppose these Sonnets addressed to any mere person, is not only to lose the truth they suggest, but, in most cases, we must see both the writers and the parties supposed to be addressed, in a very absurd and ridiculous point of view.

CHAPTER VI.

DRAYTON.

[A few brief remarks on Drayton and Sidney, for these writers belong very clearly to the mystic school in some of their writings.]

To show the metaphysical character of Drayton's studies, we cite the following Sonnet, explaining our understanding of it as we proceed. We must suppose the poet is contemplatively regarding himself under the idea of the all-embracing unity, a sense of which is seen to enclose the poet's individuality in that of the whole ; and thus, he sees himself in and out of God ; and God as in and out of himself. He is one and yet not one ; two, yet but one—the mystery of which oppresses him :

You not alone, when you are still alone,
O God, from You that I could private be,
Since You one were, I never since was one.

As if he had said, Since I recognized the doctrine of

the unity, I have not realized my own individuality
—if You are All, I am nothing, &c.

Since You in me, myself since out of me,
Transported from myself into your Being.

That is, since I conceived the doctrine which affirms
that your life is in man or in me, I seem transported
out of myself.

Though either distant, present yet to either,
Senseless with too much joy, each other seeing,
And only absent when we are together.

Here the poet seems to have been so much op-
pressed with his sense of this mystical presence, yet
absence, of that which in some sort is both present
and absent, that he cries out—

Give me myself, and take yourself again ;
Devise some means but how I may forsake You.
So much is mine that doth with You remain,
That taking what is mine, with Me I take You ;
You do bewitch me ; O that I could fly
From myself, You, or from Yourself, I.

In this Sonnet we see a sort of Jacob's wrestling,
not with God, indeed, as represented in Scripture,
but with God's work, the Image of his Beauty.

Shakespeare's Sonnets, 135 and 136, supposed to be a mere play upon his name, are founded on the same difficulty, that of conceiving the unity in the duality.

Then we see the poet addressing a Sonnet to the "Soul," full of Aristotle's philosophy, and another to what he calls the "Shadow"—the visible world being regarded as the *shadow* of the invisible soul.

The concluding Sonnet of the "Ideas" very well exhibits the character or condition of the poet, lost as he was in his sense of the UNITY, having complete faith in it, while yet it never reached a positive realization; since that, according to his own theory, would have annihilated himself—a result which, however, would have been acceptable, because of his faith; for he quite plainly tells us of the surrender of his *heart*, while at the same time we easily perceive that his intellect was not convinced—this surrender of the heart reminding us of Shakespeare's 133d Sonnet.

Drayton's last Sonnet reads :

Truce, gentle Love, a parley now I crave ;
Methinks 'tis long since first these wars begun.

'That is, the poet had long been engaged in his met-

aphysical studies into nature, addressed as his gentle Love.

Nor thou, [says he,] nor I, the better yet can have :
Bad is the match where neither party won.
I offer the conditions of fair peace,
My *heart* for hostage that it shall remain ;
Discharge our forces, here let malice cease,
So for my pledge thou give me pledge again :
Or if nothing but death will serve thy turn,
Still thirsting for subversion of my state ;
Do what thou canst ; rase, massacre, and burn,
Let the world see the utmost of thy hate :
I send defiance ; since, if overthrown,
Thou vanquishing, the conquest is mine own.

Why was the conquest his own ? Because, in his theory, he had so conceived the Unity that whatever might happen to him belonged to the Whole, of which he was an inseparable part, sharing in the whole.

This sense of the supreme claims of Sovereign Beauty over all human considerations, is conspicuous in the Shakespeare Sonnets, in which the poet, like Drayton, to use an Eastern expression, so acknowledges his *absorption* in the whole, that no loss whatever can be visited upon him in the inferior state, but

what he is sure to reap the benefit of in the superior life, which Drayton, like Shakespeare, calls his “better part,” regarding it evidently as his proper life. (Compare Drayton’s 44th with Shakespeare’s 39th and 74th Sonnets.)

In the 88th Sonnet, Shakespeare, not merely carrying out to the very extreme the doctrine of Chaucer, to think no ill of his Mistress, and to excuse “quickly” whatever may seem wrong, goes even beyond Chaucer, and offers, when aggrieved himself, to take part and “fight” against himself :

88. “Upon thy part [says he] I can set down a story
Of faults concealed, wherein I am attainted ;
That thou, in losing me, shalt win much glory :
And I by this will be a gainer too ;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.”

The poet, in this mystical mode of writing, is, in reality, enforcing the Scripture doctrine of suffering for Christ’s sake.

The expression, “for thy right”—fighting, or suffering *for thy right*—signifies *for thy sake*, and

this involves the principle of suffering for Christ's sake ; for we must recollect that the true Lady in the case is often pictured as holding the eternal scales for distributing even-handed justice—and this is a principal office of the Eternal Son.

Christ historically suffered martyrdom ; but spiritually he is righteousness, and lives forever ; and to fight or suffer for right, or righteousness, is therefore to fight or suffer for Christ's sake.

The same principle is expressed, in a varied form, in Shakespeare's 80th Sonnet, where the poet says :

“ If I be cast away—

that is, if I be lost in this service of the Beautiful, which is but another name for the Good and the True,—the fair, kind, and true being the eternal Trinity, according to the 105th Sonnet—

“ The worst was this [says the poet], my Love was my decay.”

And to die in the service of Love was regarded as a religious sacrifice—a loss to the loser's glory.

This again is similar to the conclusion of Drayton's 42d Sonnet :

I care not I, how men affected be—

i. e., by what he writes—meaning to write in honor
of the Highest—

I care not I, how men affected be,
Nor who commends nor discommends my verse ;
It pleaseth me, if I my woes rehearse,
And in my lines if SHE my love may see :
Only my comfort still consists in this,
Writing Her praise I cannot write amiss.

This again is paralleled in Shakespeare's 112th
Sonnet :

“ What care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'ergreen my bad, my good allow ?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue ;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steeld sense or changes, right or wrong.”

Here the object is personified as usual, even as if its *voice* could be audibly heard ; but it can only be heard, as in Scripture the conscience is said to be heard—as the still small voice.

As a further evidence of the metaphysical char-

acter of Drayton's Sonnets, we cite the 18th, addressed

TO THE CELESTIAL NUMBERS.

To this our world, to learning, and to Heaven,
Three nines there are, to every one a nine,
One number of the Earth, the other both Divine,
One woman now makes three odd numbers even.

Nine orders first of angels be in Heaven,
Nine Muses do with learning still frequent,
These with the Gods are ever resident.

Nine worthy women to the world were given :
My worthy one to these nine worthies addeth,
And my fair Muse, one Muse to the nine,
And my good angel (in my soul divine)
With one more order these nine orders gladdeth :
 My Muse, my Worthy, and my Angel then,
 Makes every one of these three nines a Ten."

The readers of Dante's *Vita Nuova* may see how the poet repeatedly and mystically comments upon the number *nine*, in connection with the mystic Lady Beatrice, and may not find it difficult to see the two poets in reality contemplating the same mystery under the number *nine*. But Spenser is among the number of the poets who held to some similar mystery, as may be seen in his 74th Sonnet, from which

the critics have inferred a name for his lady-love, although, in fact, the three Elizabeths (in that Sonnet) stand related to their respective *spirits*, as the Elizabeth of the Gospel is related to Mary.

The Sonnet reads :

Most happy letters ! fram'd by skilful trade—

that is, most happy *Sonnets*; for the poet is here referring to his own Sonnets, called “happy leaves” in the first Sonnet; said to be framed by a *skilful* poet, and called “love-learned letters” in the 43d Sonnet—

Most happy letters ! fram'd by skilful trade,
With which that happy name was first designed,
The which *three times thrice* happy hath me made,
With gifts of body, fortune, and of mind—

which are only other words for body, soul, and spirit—

The first my being to me gave by kind, [i. e., by nature,]
From Mother's womb deriv'd by due descent ;
The second is my Sovereign Queen most kind,
That honor and large riches to me lent—

—“lent,” says the poet, and we feel authorized to interpret the word in harmony with its use in the 4th Sonnet of Shakespeare.* Here may be a

* Vide Remarks on Shakespeare's Sonnets, p. 77.

stumbling-block to most readers, who may per severingly insist that the English Queen was really referred to, though history does not confirm us in the belief that she ever overloaded Spenser with either honors or riches; and we prefer to adhere to the general *theory*, that Spenser means to celebrate what he no doubt felt as a fact, that nature, the Elizabeth or midwife to all of us, had not only given him a body, but had given him also an honorable distinction by endowing his soul with *riches*.

*

“The third, my Love, my life’s last ornament,
By whom my spirit out of dust was raised:
To speak her praise and glory excellent,
Of all alive most worthy to be praised.

Ye three Elizabeths! for ever live,
That three such *graces* did unto me give.”

To those who can catch the real meaning of the poet, these three Elizabeths are still alive, and will “for ever live,” as the three Marys will live for ever, in a deeper sense than any history can make immortal, for it is they who give immortality to the history.

We must repeat, that because Beauty, the Sovereign Beauty which the poets see, is really ex-

pressed in nature, the efforts of the poets to indicate it constantly lead to the use of such imagery as often deludes the reader into the belief that the mere imagery was intended; and very few readers allow their love of ease to be disturbed by a requirement to observe how impossible it is to reconcile a large number of the sonnets, scattered in the works of the several poets, to the notion of their having been addressed to a mortal woman.

Examples are without number: we take one from

SIDNEY,

the 49th Sonnet in the collection entitled *Astrophel and Stella*.

As usual, the biographers of Sidney insist that these Sonnets were addressed to a veritable woman, whose name by marriage became Lady Rich—though we must believe that Sidney's devotion to *Stella* had the riches of the Spirit in view, according to St. Paul's sense—but without rendering obedience to what, in his 1st Sonnet, he calls “step-dame Study's blows.” These Sonnets of Sidney, like those of other writers of the age of Sidney, were not addressed to any real person, but represent the

studies of Sidney into the mysteries of Nature under the usual figures. The 49th Sonnet reads thus :

49. I on my horse, and Love on me, doth try
Our horsemanships, while, by strange work, I prove
A horseman to my horse, a horse to Love ;
And now man's wrongs in me, poor beast, desery.
The rein wherewith my rider doth me tie,
Are humbled thoughts, which bit of rev'rence move,
Curb'd in with fear, but with gilt boss above
Of hope, which makes it seem fair to the eye.

The wand is Will ; thou, Fancy, saddle art,
Girt fast by Memory ; and while I spur
My horse, he spurs, with sharp desire, my heart :
He sits me fast, however I do stir,
And now hath me to his hand so right,
That in the menage myself takes delight.

How can any reader make this circus-like representation, if taken literally, harmonize with the notion that the poet is addressing a lady ? In the picture, we have a *horse*, the poet upon the horse, and the poet's lady-love, in some inexplicable manner upon the poet himself. This is the picture taken literally.

Let us cut this problem through its centre by referring to the common notion of Body, Soul, and

Spirit, as the triple object in the poet's thoughts, figuring the Body, as the horse (called a "beast" in Shakespeare's 50th Sonnet), while the poet figures the Soul as himself; and now, above all, he conceives the Spirit, which is figured by the lady-love—the figure of the Divine Spirit, universally expressed in all things, for which reason it cannot be represented by anything in heaven, on earth, or in the waters under the earth.

If the reader but once catches a glimpse of this doctrine, and will examine the Sonnets in its *light*, he will be astonished to find how readily they will give out their sense, by which the reader may find himself suddenly as if in intimate association with the most devotional men of past ages, who, unshackled in their own spirits, have laid no burthens to be blindly borne by their followers—except that of mistaking a Divine for a human love; by which the truth loses nothing, though the reader may indeed lose much by wanting what are called lovers' eyes, or eyes for the Beautiful.

The acute reader, once in the vein for this sort of study, can hardly fail to see that most of the Sonnets of the period to which we refer are poetic studies

into the mysteries of nature, figured as a lady, in whose service it was happiness to die.

We do not by any means deny, however, that inasmuch as the Beauty of Nature is expressed in all things, the sonnet-poets are perpetually running into representations of the special, when the real design is universal : hence the argument, drawn from the mere language of the sonnets, which we are willing to admit was in some cases addressed to women indeed, is almost constantly plausible, that the special only was intended ; and to the young, often carried into captivity by the sweet word Love, the argument will in general appear sound.

But when we see Petrarch, the patriarch of sonnet-poetry, making love-sonnets in extreme old age, in appearance addressed to a married woman whose husband was living, do we not observe the incongruity, especially when he ventures to compare his lady to no less a being than the Son of God ?

Let the reader remember that some divines and many philosophers have called the World the Son of God, as Israel is called in Scripture the first-born of God, and he may finally pierce the cloud of words, and discover the real ground in Nature for a vast mass of mystical writing about *something*, said to be

directly under the eyes of all men, who yet, the mystics say, do not understand what they see. *Life*, indeed, is not to be understood in its origin, or as a *caused* thing ; but through experience and observation, crowned with the divine blessing, man may understand something of life.

Chaucer, in the poem entitled *The Book of the Duchesse*, in reference to his really nameless Lady, intending simply to designate her purity, has used the figurative (French) word *Blanche*, upon which the editors have made the grave conclusion that the reference was to the wife of John of Gaunt, whose name, it appears, was *Blanche*. We are very confident that the inference is unfounded ; and from that error, and similar mistakes with regard to some other indications found in the mystic writings of the poets, especially the gross inference from the *Shakespeare Sonnets*, we feel disposed to regard the allusions in the *Sidney Sonnets*, seemingly to the name *Rich*, as having no reference to a person of that name. But, if a real person in this case was intended, we should desire to look upon the particular Sonnets in which the name occurs as exceptional, or as not belonging legitimately to the general idea

illustrated in the Sonnets; in which we feel bound to consider the author of the Defence of Poetry as designing to honor what he calls Immortal Beauty and Immortal Goodness.

If not at liberty to do this, we must make large deductions from the extravagant and universal praise bestowed by all of Sidney's contemporaries upon the model knight of the Elizabethan age, who can hardly be excused for perseveringly addressing love-sonnets to the wife of another man—not content with the expression of a supposed Platonic admiration, but seeking a positive possession, in total disregard of the sacred marital rights of the legitimate husband.

In justice to the memory of Sydney, let us be willing at least to seek a symbolical interpretation, having truth in view in the first instance, with the purpose, also, of defending the interests of humanity and the dignity of literature.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAUCER

LIVED at a time when hermetic writing was common among scholars scattered all over Europe, communicating with each other usually in the Latin language. He is well known to have been the friend of Wickliffe, and was, in spirit, a Reformer. He was intimate with the Italian scholars of his day, who were also imbued with sentiments which led to the Reformation. He thought well enough of the hermetic poem of William de Lorris to translate into English a considerable part of the Romaunt of the Rose, one of the most ingenious pieces of Hermetic writing extant—to those who understand it; and although the Canon's Tale was by many considered as having been levelled against alchemists, it was known by alchemists themselves to have been written in their interest, or rather in the interest of the mysterious Truth which they

sought under the figure of searching for the Philosopher's Stone—the Rose of the Romaunt.

We have not space for pointing out the evidences of hermetic writing in Chaucer, but will refer to a single feature, noticed by Mrs. Jameson in her *Lives of the Poets*, who, by the way, relying upon the sonnets and poems of the poets for biographical materials, was entirely deceived, and really knew nothing in many instances of the poets she assumed to write about.

“In the earliest of Chaucer's poems [says Mrs. Jameson], ‘*The Court of Love*,’ he describes himself as enamored of a fair mistress, whom, in the style of the time, he calls *Rosial*, and himself *Philo-genet*.”

It would be quite out of the question to make decisive inferences from the use of the mere name, *Rosial*; but one who understands the Romaunt of the *Rose*, with its two rich jewels at the bottom of a well—where Truth is said to be—will naturally suspect a symbolic purpose in the adoption of the name, *Rosial*, by Chaucer, as that of his mistress; and the word *Philo-genet*, the poet's assumed name as a lover of the fair lady, is also extremely suggestive to a hermetic student, as pointing to the

genesis or genetical state of the poet's own soul. Mrs. Jameson continues :

"The lady is described as 'sprung of noble race and high,' with 'angel visage,' 'golden hair,' and eyes orient and bright, with figure 'sharply slender,' 'so that from the head unto the foot all is sweet womanhood,' and arrayed in a vest of green, with her tresses braided with silk and gold. She treats him at first with disdain, and the poet swoons away at her feet: satisfied by this convincing proof of his sincerity, she is induced to accept his homage, and becomes his 'liege lady,' and the sovereign of his thoughts."

All this might happen in the visible world; but it corresponds precisely with the representations of the mystics, having in view the Queen of the Isle in Borderie's poem, recited in the introductory chapter of this work.

"In this poem," continues Mrs. Jameson, "which is extremely wild, and has come down to us in an imperfect shape, Chaucer quaintly admonishes all lovers, that an absolute faith in the perfection of their mistress, and obedience to her slightest caprice, are among the first duties; that they must in all cases believe their lady faultless; that

'In everything, she doth but as she should;
 Construe the best, believe no tales new,
 For many a lie is told that seemeth full true;
 But think that she, so bounteous and so fair,
 Could not be false; imagine this alway.

* * * * *

And though thou seest a fault right at thine eye,
 Excuse it quick, and gloss it prettily.'

"Nor are they [says Mrs. Jameson], to presume
 on their own worthiness, nor to imagine it possible
 they can earn

"By right her mercy, nor of equity,
 But of her grace and womanly pity."

"There is, however [continues Mrs. Jameson,] no authority for supposing that at the time this poem was written, Chaucer really aspired to the hand of any lady of superior birth, or was very seriously in love; he was then about nineteen, and had probably selected some fair one, according to the custom of his age, to be his 'fancy's queen,' and in the same spirit of poetical gallantry, he writes to do her honor; he says himself,

'My intent and all my busy care
 Is for to write this treatise as I can,

Unto my Ladie, stable, true, and sure;
Faithful and kind since first that she began,
Me to accept in service as her man;
To her be all the pleasures of this book,
That when her like, she may it read and look.'

"Mixed up with all this gallantry and refinement [says Mrs. Jameson], are some passages *inconceivably absurd and gross*; but such were those times,—at once rude and magnificent—an odd mixture of cloth of frieze and cloth of gold!"

This is Mrs. Jameson's account of Chaucer's Rosial, and of the laws of courtship as prescribed for all lovers, who are required to think their mistresses absolutely perfect, while the lovers are to assume no merit whatever as proper to themselves.

Lovers, without laws so gravely announced, are sufficiently apt to think well of their mistresses in the flesh, even to the point of losing all sense of that unseen perfection, which Spenser, following Plato, assures us does really exist, and which we think was the object in view of Chaucer in setting forth the laws of Love.

After what we have said of this subject in connection with Shakespeare, Spenser, Drayton, and

Sidney, it would be too great a tax to attempt to show that, in the mind of Chaucer, *Rosial* is a representative figure, and stands for a combination of virtues which the poet honors under her name, as fidelity, firmness, truth, and goodness—beautiful virtues in either sex, but when conceived in their unity, become the object of all that Mystic Love which forms the body of the mystic writings preparatory to the Reformation, in which Love signifies religion, and which was chiefly addressed to *Her whose ways are everlasting commandments* (*Ecclesiasticus i. 5*).

It is something in the direction we are pointing when we see the prevalence of that sort of Erotic literature prior to the Reformation; and see comparatively nothing of it in these days. To what is this owing? The answer is not that human nature has changed, but—and this tells the story—the *stake* is no longer an argument against the freedom of opinion.

It is highly interesting to discover that the leading minds of the Middle Ages, if we judge by such men as Chaucer, and others of his school, were Reformers, in the best sense of the word; but it would be more interesting still, if we could discover the doctrine, which underlies the external mode

of writing so mysteriously about Love. The object we see is almost always a Lady with divine virtues or attributes,—such as the imagination delights to picture in one who may be conceived the Queen of Heaven.

If the reader will suppose a screen in front of him, behind which he imagines the **PERFECT** or Perfection, conceived as a Lady, the embodiment of that perfection, and then seek to penetrate the screen, with the idea that it can only be done by the grace of the Lady, who never exercises that grace but upon the condition that the seeker comes into conformity with her nature by obedience to her laws, which are enigmatically written or pictured on the screen itself,—and then figure his hopes of success by her smiles and his fears of failure by her frowns, he will have the elements which enter into a large mass of Middle Age writings on the **Mystic Love**; and may, to some extent, enter into an understanding of the mystery, by considering visible nature as the screen, and the spirit of nature as the Lady. If, in place of the screen, we interpose a book purporting to give an account of either the screen or of what is behind it, we shall see the same philosophy, provided the book is accepted as an in-

terpreter of the screen, and not as the screen itself, nor as the Lady herself.

We may complete the programme by regarding the spirit as masculine and the visible as feminine, and see in man the image of both, himself the pilgrim on a journey of discovery, under the requirement to come into harmony with eternal law.

At the commencement of the journey the man sees the screen, which Spenser figures by the spotted hide of the Panther (Sonnet 53); or he sees two things so intermixed that he can hardly distinguish the “golden tresses” of the Lady from the “golden net” in which they are attired (Sonnet 37).

These *two* things, the tresses and the golden net, present one great difficulty to the student. At first they seem quite distinct from each other, and the pilgrim with difficulty understands that the two are not, in fact, so different from each other as they appear, and at length they so merge into each other as that each becomes the other and the two become One.

This One is the Mystery: and that Mystery is in the student himself, and is recognized when he attains to the Pythagorean self-knowledge.

But at this point the student is no longer himself. He passes into the absolute self-denial, or

denial of himself; but so finds himself in the whole that all “difference” is negated. He is then prepared to understand much of the hermetic mysticism, and will see the force of the 105th Sonnet of Shakespeare:

“Let not my love be call’d idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellency ;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin’d,
One thing expressing, leaves out *difference*.
Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,—
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words ;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true, have often liv’d alone,
Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.”

This notion of the screen, with the Lady behind it, conceived as the Perfect—the Beautiful, the Good, and the True—has this special philosophy to recommend it—that, if any one conceives the Beauty and seeks its smiles by a studied conformity with the highest conceivable perfection, he must, by the law of his own spirit, evolve from himself the highest perfec-

tion of which he is capable ; and in the end he may discover the unity of his own better spirit with that of the Lady herself ; and then the screen itself is seen to be but the “ seemly raiment ” of the seeker’s own heart, according to the 22d Sonnet of Shakespeare.

The author of these remarks has not attempted a general criticism or a general notice of the poets—not even of those he has especially named. He desires to show that some of the great poets, whose names adorn English literature, have elements of mysticism in their writings, to be explained on the general ground that they made nature a distinct object of study, under the figure of a perfect Lady —not simply as visible, but as being double, visible and invisible, the two being the mystic ONE.

Chaucer’s minor poems, on a close examination, will show the truth of this view.

We do not feel called upon, for our purpose, to go into minute details in proof of this position, and will merely refer the reader to the description of the “ schippe ” (ship) in Chaucer’s dream, which needed neither “ mast nor rudder, nor master for the governance,” &c. ; and then, by considering that the dream takes place in an isle—remembering the

description of the ship in Colin Clouts in imitation of Chaucer—and he must soon see the mystic queen of the poets, as the proper subject of the poem.

The student will see the same Lady in the Book of the Duchess. In this latter poem the man in mourning requires, as a condition upon which he will tell his story, that the hearer shall

——— “ hooly with all his wytte,
Do his intente to herken hitte.”

This is simply a caution from the poet himself to the reader, that he will give his entire attention to the story, in order to understand it, thereby plainly warning us of its mystic character.

The story of the man in black commences—

“ Hit happed that I come an a deye
Into a *place*,” &c.

This *place* is the inner man; the scene of the story, which has no more to do with John of Gaunt than with Jack the Giant-killer, although critics have taken great pains to connect the story with that nobleman and his lady.

The poet, as in Colin Clouts, makes a journey into spiritual life, and figures the recognized inward principles as the “fairest company of ladies” that

ever any man with eye had seen together in one place. (We paraphrase for the convenience of the reader.) The poet does not know whether he was led to the “place” by accident or by grace, &c. Among the ladies—meaning inward principles of life—the man saw one that was “like none of the rest,”

“ For I dare swear [says he], without doubt,
That as the summer’s sun bright
Is fairer, clearer, and hath more light
Than any other planet in heaven,
The moon, or the stars seven ;
For all the world, so had she
Surmounted them all in beauty
Of manner, and of comeliness,
Of stature, and of so well-set gladness ;
Of goodleyhede [goodness], and so well beseye ;
In short, what shall I say ?
By God, and by his halwes twelve [twelve apostles]
It was my sweet, right all herself.”

The Lady is then minutely described, and is no other than the mystic queen of the poets, the Cynthia of Colin Clouts. That she is represented as having died in the Book of the Duchess, is only a figure for the sense of deprivation which visits the

poetic soul when its consciousness of inward truth and beauty is obscured. Herbert tells us of the effect in the poem already cited :

“ O what a damp and shade
Doth me invade !
No stormy night
Can so afflict, or so affright,
As thy eclipsed light.”

It is not out of place in this connection to remind the reader of the doctrine that heaven is in man, according to Scripture ; and whether figured as a Lady conceived as perfect, or as the Immanuel himself, the result upon the inquiring soul will be the same. If this is thought to be too grave a subject to be thus introduced, let the reader perceive in this the reason, or one of the reasons, why poets have written so mystically about it in dreams, as may be seen in most of Chaucer's minor poems.

Until pointed out, the general reader can scarcely be aware of the extent to which Scripture truth is appropriated by Chaucer and other poets, yet almost always in the mystic mode of writing.

Thus, in the Flower and the Leaf, Chaucer describes the *narrow way* which leadeth unto life (Matt. vii. 14), as follows. In a somewhat dis-

turbed state of the spirit, he describes himself as walking through marvellous scenery—the world ·

“ And, at the last, a path of little brede
I found, that greatly had not used be ;
For it forgrownen was with grass and weede,
That well unneth a wighte might it see :
Thought I, ‘ This path some whider goth, pardie ! ’
And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasant herber, well wrought,” &c.

Now the *arbor* to which the poet was brought was still the *man* (sometimes described as a ship), and is said to have been so constructed (surrounded by a *hedge*, as it is called), that no one from without could see whether “ there were any wight within or no ; but one within might perceive all that there was withoute, in the field,” &c.

This is simply the poet’s mode of indicating man as the subject of the poem ; and in this Flower and the Leaf, the chief subject of contemplation is IMMORTALITY, under the emblem of the Daisy (or the *Marguerette*).

The general reader does not usually know what he misses in the reading of Chaucer, by not recognizing the mystical elements pervading his poems,

and more especially by not understanding that he carries the secret in himself, where heaven is said to be.

The Cuckoo and the Nightingale is one of the most easily understood of the smaller poems of Chaucer, and one of the most beautiful. Like most of the minor poems of Chaucer, it is allegorical; the Nightingale being a figure for all that is good in life, while the Cuckoo, as usual, figures whatever is opposite to it—a disturbing evil.

In this poem Mr. Bell finds occasion for a pointed note at page 221 (vol. iv.), in these words:

"Thus, in the Court of Love and the Assembly of Foules, the birds are represented as worshipping Nature, the God of love."

This object, here called the God of Love, is no other than the same Nature when figured as a *perfect* lady, to whom the lover is said to owe entire obedience, according to the injunction already recited from the Court of Love.

This object, when figured as a person, is generally represented either as masculine or as feminine, although in some few instances it is referred to as a sacred object under another name. In the 20th

Sonnet of Shakespeare the two natures are addressed as one—the master-mistress of the poet's love.

When mystic writers refer to Nature as perfect, they always mean perfect in respect to its spirit, which is regarded as One, ever the “Same,” and incapable of change. But they never say this in a physical or material sense, for the poets are the living Nightingales of the human race, to whom a mere materialist is a Cuckoo—a bird of evil omen.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE find a very perfect example of the hermetic poet in

CAREW.

This poet addressed many of his poems to CELIA; and in Celia we see Cynthia—the Cynthia of Colin Clouts and of the poet Drayton; and we see also the Rosalind or Rosial of Chaucer in the same lady.

It is not known, says Mrs. Jameson, following the statements of others, who Carew's Celia was: and it does not seem to have occurred to any one that, like Shakespeare's "lovely boy," she might have been of the mystic tribe; but Lord Clarendon, probably knowing as little of Carew as of other poets with their mystical or mythical loves, does not hesitate to record as history the mere suppositions of others about the life and latter years of the poet, who was, we have no reason to doubt, as pure a

Christian as Spenser shows himself to have been in Colin Clouts and elsewhere in his writings.

We read of a certain lady in *Ecclesiasticus* (iv. 16–18), worthy of all love, and who might well be regarded as the very object of the mystical poets in most of what they write of Rosalind, &c. :

Eccles. iv. 16 : If a man commit himself unto her, he shall inherit her ; and his generation shall hold her in possession.

17. For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul and try him by her laws—

and these laws, we are told, chap. i. 5, are everlasting commandments—

18. Then will she return the straight way unto him, and comfort him, and show him her secrets.

19. But if he go wrong she will forsake him, and give him over to his own ruin.

What lady—or, to drop the feeble modern phrase, what woman—is here spoken of? She is the universal mother, who is represented as a widow when any one of her children “go wrong,” or, in other words, do wrong; but we read that He that loveth her loveth life, and they that seek her early shall

be filled with joy. * * They that serve her shall minister to the Holy One: and them that love her the Lord doth love.

These are the words of the wise man; and all experience and all observation in life tend to fortify them. But the woman is wisdom: and it was of this woman that the wise man said, “I loved her and sought her out from my youth, I desired to make her my spouse, and *I was a lover of her beauty.*”

And where can the beauty of wisdom be seen save in the works of God, where the spirit of wisdom is said to “work all things.” Hence this teaching brings the student around again to the universal mother, the Lady of the poets.

We have not intended to say or to intimate that the *object* of poetic adoration is always conceived in the same manner among the poets, or is always conceived in the same way by any one poet at different periods of life. If it were so, it might be defined and brought before the imagination of the reader. We say that, generally, the object is Nature conceived in the spirit as the Spirit of Beauty, and then figured as a lady; but with a freedom which makes beauty, in all objects of nature, subservient to the poet.

The illustrations of hermetic writing are very numerous in Carew; and the practised reader can hardly look amiss for them in the volume we have before us, while the general reader will scarcely see anything but common-place writing.

Let us take, for example, a little poem entitled,

ON SIGHT OF A GENTLEWOMAN'S FACE IN THE WATER.

1. Stand still, you floods, do not deface
That image which you bear;
So votaries from every place
To you shall altars rear.

2. No winds but lovers' sighs blow here,
To trouble these glad streams,
On which no star from any sphere
Did ever dart such beams.

3. To crystal then in haste congeal,
Lest you should lose your bliss;
And to my cruel fair reveal
How cold, how hard she is.

4. But if the envious nymphs shall fear
Their beauties will be scorned,
And hire the ruder winds to tear
That face which you adorned;

5. Then rage and foam amain, that we
Their malice may despise ;
And from your froth we soon shall see
A second Venus rise."

Here the classical allusion to Venus, as rising from the foam of the sea, may answer a double purpose, not only serving to show the sense of Carew in his own poem, but his understanding, also, of the fable of Venus rising from the foam of the sea—the sea being Nature, whose beauty is Venus; and this beauty is the *face* seen by Carew in the water.

Again :

When Carew sees a lady, a veritable lady, who is, in his eye or estimation, simple and good, unaffectedly true by nature, and altogether free from art and guile, he writes a little poem and professes his love for the lady; because, as he tells us, she resembles his mistress, his mistress being Nature. Thus :

TO A LADY RESEMBLING MY MISTRESS.

1. Fair copy of my Celia's face,
Twin of my soul, thy perfect grace
Claims in my love an equal place.

2. Disdain not a divided heart :
Though all be hers, you shall have part ;
Love is not ty'd to rules of art.
3. For as my soul first to her flew,
Yet stay'd with me ; so now 'tis true
It dwells with her, though fled to you.
4. Then entertain this wand'ring guest,
And if not love, allow it rest ;
It left not, but mistook its nest.
5. Nor think my love, or your fair eyes,
Cheaper, 'cause from the sympathies
You hold with her, these flames arise.
6. To lead, or brass, or some such bad
Metal, a prince's stamp may add
That value, which it never had.
7. But to the pure refined ore,
The stamp of kings imparts no more
Worth, than the metal had before ;
8. Only the image gives the rate
To subjects ; in a foreign state
'Tis prized as much for its own weight.

9. So, though all other hearts resign
To your pure worth, yet you have mine
Only because you are her coin.

That is, plainly, the lady was admired because of her truthfulness and other qualities, which marked her as *Nature's coin*.

When an impulse of mere idle or vain curiosity, and not a true love, or love of truth, prompts some one to seek to discover the hermetic mistress of Carew, he, as usual, writes a little poem in which he warns the impudent seeker to beware. Thus :

TO ONE THAT DESIRED TO KNOW MY MISTRESS.

Seek not to know my love, for she
Hath vowed her constant faith to me ;
Her *mild aspects* are mine, and thou
Shalt only find a *stormy brow* :
For if her beauty stir desire
In me, her kisses quench the fire ;
Or, I can to love's fountain go,
Or dwell upon her hills of snow.
But when thou burn'st, she shall not spare
One gentle breath to cool the air ;
Thou shalt not climb those Alps, nor spy
Where the sweet springs of Venus lie ;

*Search hidden nature, and there find
A TREASURE to enrich thy mind ;
Discover arts not yet reveal'd,
But let my mistress live conceal'd ;
Though men by knowledge wiser grow,
Yet here 'tis wisdom not to know.*

Here the seeker is really told where to search for the secret treasure, it being hid in nature; yet with a refinement of artistic skill, the poet points to possible incidental discoveries, like those of the gold-seekers in alchemy, who, in searching for the philosopher's stone, which also is the hidden "treasure," if they found not the treasure itself, really made many incidental discoveries, which ultimately grew into the science of chemistry.

In the poem entitled "My mistress commanding me to return her letters," the poet indicates a change of doctrine, not in its principle, as depending upon his mistress, but in having fallen short of a complete knowledge of the mistress, to wit, Nature. The poet describes himself as having met the lady by "chance" while travelling on the road of the god of love; and then tells us of his discovery that there was more in the lady than he knew or had known—a very common case upon this subject. He relied upon

his first impressions, and walked very confidently in them for a time, which he calls walking by the side of his mistress “from place to place, fearing no violence,” &c. In other words, he had accepted as *Truth*, and walked by it confidently, that which a further experience of the world had shown to be defective or incomplete. He had discovered that there was more in nature, within and without, than his philosophy (or intuition) had represented; and he then felt called upon, by the highest considerations of Truth, his mistress, to lay aside his cruder opinions (figured as his letters to his mistress), and make a new appeal to obtain what he calls the “heart” of his lady, meaning a more central truth.

His mistress signifies Truth, (for nature and truth are one), whose “sway” is so powerful, that her commands must be obeyed. In the act of obedience he renews the expression of his perfect faith :

“ Tell her no length of time, nor change of air,
No cruelty, disdain, absence, despair—
No, nor her steadfast constancy—can deter
My vassal heart from ever honoring her.”

This is the doctrine announced by Chaucer; and it is just and proper, only in view of the mystic

truth conveyed in it, that the lady, to whom such vassalage is due, is perfection, or perfect Truth.

In this way most of Carew's poems are to be interpreted.

When the poet has been guilty of some neglect of Her whose "ways are everlasting commandments," and falls accordingly into deserved evil—feeling it perhaps "right at his eye"—he is ready with his little poem, in which he figures his mistress (nature) as an angry "Lady" rebuking him for his inconstancy, &c.

Carew gives us a hermetic poem, entitled,

TO MY RIVAL.

Hence, vain intruder! haste away,
Wash not with unhallow'd brine
The footsteps of my Celia's shrine ;
Nor on her purer altars lay
Thy empty words, accents that may
Some looser dame to love incline :
She must have offerings more divine ;
Such pearly drops, as youthful May
Scatters before the rising day ;
Such smooth soft language, as each line
Might soothe an angry God, or stay

Jove's thunder, make the hearers pine
With envy: do this, thou shalt be
Servant to her, rival with me.

It is perhaps not beyond the limits of the possible, that one man shall thus invite a rival to become a servant with him in the courtship of the same mortal woman; but we hope the reader will not attempt to confirm the supposition by appealing to the story of Cato.

The rivalry invited by Carew is such as a communicant in the church might extend to an infidel, to partake of the Holy Sacrament, after first warning him to put away from him his “evil doings,” assuring him—the condition being complied with—he shall be an acknowledged servant of God and a rival with him in seeking His grace; for the true lady in the case, as in the Scripture itself, is called the bride of the Lord.

The impossibility of truly picturing the ideal Beauty is the subject of Carew's poem addressed

To THE PAINTER,

in which the truth is expressed, but in a concealed or hermetic style.

Fond man, that hop'st to catch that face, &c.

The face here intended is not the face of either man or woman, but the face of Nature, seen in her Beauty, which signifies love also in this class of writings. This is the face referred to in Shakespeare's 93d Sonnet :

“Heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell.
* * * * *

How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show !”

But to return to Carew :

Fond man, that hop'st to catch that face,
With those false colors, whose short grace
Serves but to show the lookers on
The faults of thy presumption ;
Or at the least to let us see
That is divine, but yet not she : &c.

Thus far this poem expresses the principle set out in Shakespeare's 84th Sonnet, in the concluding lines addressed to the Beautiful :

“ You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise which makes your praises worse.”

That is, the invisible beauty cannot but be made

less (being the perfect in itself), by any human attempt to represent it, all such representations making it “worse.”

Shakespeare’s sense of this is the root of his opening Sonnets, in the 16th of which he invokes the direct inspiration of the Spirit of Beauty itself, assured that Beauty must live when “drawn by its own sweet skill,” meaning nature-skill.

This is also the precise meaning of the concluding lines of Carew’s poem addressed To the Painter, which is in the very spirit of the opening Sonnets of Shakespeare, having reference to the same “heir,” as a product by the poet of the beautiful when inspired by the Spirit of Beauty itself. Says Carew to the imaginary painter,

Yet your art cannot equalize
This picture in her lover’s eyes.

Here the expression “lover’s eyes” is technical, as belonging to that class of poets technically called *lovers*—not because of their love of woman, but because they were so penetrated by the spirit of love as to see it in nature, as the beauty of nature. The expression *lovers’ eyes*, in this same sense, is in

Shakespeare's 55th Sonnet, to which the reader is referred ; for the Spirit of Beauty could surely be seen, as the poet thought, by that spirit of love, the possession of which made the *lover* in the sense here explained. Carew proceeds :

His eyes the pencils are which limn
Her truly, as hers copy him.

Here the spirit of man and the spirit of nature are, as it were, confronted, and are said to copy each other ; for *therein lies the true unity* which, for the reason that it has no counterpart, becomes irrepre-
sentable by visible imagery.

A truer unity is not possible than that wherein man comes into conscious unison with nature, when the two may be said poetically to image or copy each other ; and this is what is imaged in Carew's mystical poem :

His eyes the pencils are which limn
Her truly, as hers copy him ;
His heart the tablet which alone
Is for *that portrait* the truest stone.
If you would a truer see,
Mark it in their posterity ;
And you shall *read* it truly there,
When the glad world shall see their *heir*.

We see in these lines the hermetic poet. He is not writing of a physical heir in the ordinary sense; but he had in his mind that *heir* which the artist produces when inspired by the Beauty of Nature, with a sense of which the true artist is penetrated as with the spirit of life itself.

When thus made *alive*, as it were, with life itself, the artist presents us with true copies of nature where Beauty lives *unseen* to the natural eye.

This is the explanation of a poem entitled *The Inquiry*, claimed for both Carew and Herrick—doubtless in harmony with the sentiments of both of the poets.

THE INQUIRY.

Amongst the myrtles as I walked,
Love and my sighs thus intertalked :
Tell me (said I, in deep distress)
Where may I find my shepherdess ?

Here the shepherdess is a figure for the Lady Beauty, which, as we say, though in some sense visible in *all things* to the true lover, is not, on the other hand, particularly *visible* in any one thing; just as we say God is everywhere, and, for that reason, is *nowhere* in particular; for to say that God

is in any particular place, implies that he who is everywhere is not in some other place—the same view making it necessary, if we would be consistent, to say that, because Providence controls and directs all things, no particular thing or event can philosophically be said to be providential.

The poem proceeds :

Thou fool (said Love), knowest thou not this ?

In everything that's good *she is* :

Can the reader imagine that here the poet is speaking of a particular lady? No, surely. His object is to direct attention to the beauty of nature, and he continues :

In yonder tulip go and seek,
There thou mayst find her lip, her cheek.

In yon enamelled pansy by,
There thou shalt have her eurious eye ;
In bloom of peach, in rosy bud,
There wave the streamers of her blood.

In brightest lily that there stands,
The emblems of her whiter hands—

here we may see the “lily hands,” &c., of Spenser's 1st Sonnet—

In yonder rising hill there smells
Such sweets as in her bosom dwells.

'Tis true, (said I,) and thereupon
I went to pluck them one by one,
To make of parts a union;
But on a sudden all was gone.

With that I stopped. Said Love, These be,
(Fond man,) resemblances of thee;
And as these flowers, thy joys shall die,
Even in the twinkling of an eye,
And all thy hopes of her shall wither,
Like these short sweets thus knit together.

That is, to paraphrase the last couplet—All of thy hopes of seeing the beauty of nature as a whole, shall perish, because thou hast sought to divide the indivisible, and to make a living reality of perishable fragments.

As a parallel to Carew's poem, *To a Painter*, we cite Spenser's 21st Sonnet, which has precisely the same object :

“The glorious portrait of that angel's face,
Made to amaze weak men's confused skill,
And this world's worthless glory to embase,

What pen, what pencil, can express her fill ? [full or
fully.] * * * *

A greater craftsman's hand thereto doth need,
That can express the *Life* of things indeed."

We do not, by any means, claim a mystic character for all of Carew's poems. Very far from it ; for, side by side with those in which we see the mystic element, we notice others having no such features. The truth is, that the best poets are also the most natural, while, at the same time, they become so because the natural is also the spiritual, very much as the doctrine is often asserted that God is seen in His works, which, though in some sense different from the Maker, are nevertheless nothing without the Maker.

That Carew recognized the Queen of Beauty, which is only another expression for the Spirit in nature, through which it ceases to appear merely material, is sufficiently plain from the epistle to Townsend, in answer to a request to write on the subject of the death of the King of Sweden. In this poetic epistle Carew refers to a work by Townsend himself, apparently entitled the Shepherd's Paradise, which we take to be only another name for Arcadia, or the true poet's Paradise. In this epistle Carew eulogizes Townsend in the highest strain, and says :

For who like thee, (whose loose discourse is far
More neat and polished than our poems are,
Whose very gait's more graceful than our dance,)
In sweetly-flowing numbers, may advance
The glorious night ; &c.—

evidently referring to the Shepherd's Paradise, in which the writer is said to have sent down a troop of deities in their angel-shapes to guide

Our steerless barques in passion's swelling tide,
By virtue's card, and brought us from above
A pattern of their own celestial love.
Nor lay it [says our poet] in dark sullen precepts
drown'd,
But with rich fancy and clear action crown'd,
Through a mysterious fable (that was drawn
Like a transparent veil of purest lawn,
Before their dazzling beauties) the divine
Venus did with her heavenly Cupid shine.
The story's curious web, the masculine style,
The subtle sense, did time and sleep beguile ;
Pinion'd and charm'd they stood to gaze upon
Th' angel-like forms, gestures and motion ;
To hear those ravishing sounds, that did dispense
Knowledge and pleasure to the soul and sense.
It fill'd us with amazement to behold
Love made all spirit, his corporeal mould,
Dissected into atoms, melt away

*To empty air, and from the gross allay
Of mixtures, and compounding accidents
Refin'd to immaterial clements.*

But when the QUEEN OF BEAUTY did inspire
The air with perfumes, and our hearts with fire,
Breathing, from her celestial organ, sweet
Harmonious notes, our souls fell at her feet,
And did, with humble reverend duty, more
Her rare perfections than high state adore.

While the writer of these remarks has no doubt whatever of the hermetic character of many of the poems of Carew, he is fully impressed with the difficulty of making it appear to the general reader, and suggests, in addition to what has been exhibited from the poems themselves, that the reader will bear in mind that most of the poets have much to say of what they call their Muse or sometimes the Muses, and then consider what the expression signifies. The poetic Muse is the poet's inspiration ; and this again is the poet's genius ; and here, we must consider still further, that this is not anything absolutely apart from or out of nature, only so far as to be invisible, or, in other words, inaccessible to the physical senses. If now the reader will conceive Nature to be a whole, a unity, and call it the Muse of the poet,

under any feminine name, as that of Cynthia, or the Queen of Beauty, or by any other name, only holding the name subordinate to that for which it stands, he may at length come to see the *image* of it directly under his eyes ; and his problem then will be to understand it.

The hermetic character of Carew's poems may perhaps come to light by setting out with a hypothesis in the following manner :

In the poem addressed To the Painter, we have seen that the poet places particular emphasis upon what he calls the *picture* in the lover's eyes :

His eyes the pencils are which limn
Her truly, as hers copy him.

Let us suppose, hypothetically, that the real lady in this case is Lady Nature, of whom the poet has a certain spiritualized conception, which, in reality, is the basis of the poet's genius—his muse or inspiration ; but that the poet is conscious of its peculiarity, in that it stands before his mind as the very principle of life, by which the poet realizes and enjoys a certain sense of unity with the spirit of nature and of life. This we may conceive the poet's *secret*, of which he is not to speak publicly, because, among

other reasons, the object is regarded with a certain sacredness on account of its purity, which refuses all admixture with what is commonly called the profane, or corrupt world.

This state of the poet places him in a position by which he has what we call a secret sense of his unity with the higher life, called, by Shakespeare, in Sonnet 39, his “better part;” and this state of things becomes the ground of a poem by Carew, addressed

TO MY MISTRESS IN ABSENCE:

in which the poet secretly (or in a hermetic method), reveals, as it were, the sense of his unity with the higher spirit, notwithstanding his separation in the body, which he calls “absence.” In this poem the poet represents himself as

Tasting a sweet and subtle bliss,
Such as gross lovers cannot know,
Whose hands and lips meet here below, &c.

Here we have an example of the poet’s *secret love*; and as this was on no account to be proclaimed, the poet writes a little poem, entitled

SECRESY PROTESTED.

Fear not, dear Love, that I’ll reveal
Those hours of pleasure we two steal;

No eye shall see, nor yet the sun
Deservy, what thou and I have done;
No ear shall hear our love, but we
Silent as the night will be.

The God of Love himself, whose dart
Did first wound mine, and then thy heart,
Shall never know that we can tell
What sweets in stolen embraces dwell.

This only means may find it out,
If, when I die, physicians doubt
What caused my death, and there to view
Of all their judgments which was true,
Rip up my heart, oh! then, I fear,
The world will see thy picture there.

In order to a realization of the secret joy, some original division of the unity is conceived as necessary; and this “disunion” is thence called “blessed”—as in the poem entitled

AN HYMENEAL DIALOGUE:

the Chorus of which has no meaning except from the hypothetical mysticism we have assumed.

O blest *disunion*, that doth so
Our bodies from our souls divide,
As two do one, and one four grow,
Each by contraction multiplied,

That is, the poet's body is separated from the higher spirit, and then, by losing or contracting itself, becomes one ; but each of the *inseparable* parts, being two (or soul and body), grows thus to four ; but as this would be impossible but for an original separation, division, or *disunion* of the one, the disunion itself, as a means to the secret joy, is called “blessed.”

By seizing the poet's idea of the Lady, as the Beautiful in a divine sense, and hence called the Queen of Beauty, the reader is prepared to see the meaning of the little poem, or song, entitled

A BEAUTIFUL MISTRESS.

If when the sun at noon displays
His bright rays,
Thou but appear,
He then, all pale with shame and fear,
Quencheth his light,
Hides his dark brow, flies from thy sight,
And grows more dim
Compar'd to thee, than stars to him.
If thou but show thy face again,
When darkness doth at midnight reign,
The darkness flies, and light is hurl'd
Round about the silent world :

So as alike thou driv'st away
Both light and darkness, night and day.

The reader may be certain that this poem was not addressed to a lady of flesh and blood, however pretty and complimentary it may seem to be in that sense; but it was addressed to the poet's Muse—his genius or inspiration, or Nature, as Arcadia, or as seen in the Spirit of Beauty.

This same Arcadian Beauty is the object addressed in the 18th of the Shakespeare Sonnets:

“ Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate,” &c.

This Beauty, or Spirit of Beauty, is that to which Shakespeare refers in the 24th Sonnet, precisely in the sense of Carew in his poem addressed To the Painter:

“ For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictur'd lies ;
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,” &c.

This is also the “jewel” of the 27th Sonnet of Shakespeare.

Let the reader so conceive it—as the Muse of Shakespeare—and observe the almost fearful sublimity of the 27th Sonnet:

“Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travail tir’d ;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body’s work ’s expir’d :
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)—

in absence, as Carew expresses it—

Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see :
Save that my soul’s imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.”

The student may see the Lady in many of Carew’s poems not cited above. She is in the poem addressed “To his Mistress, confined.” She is in the poem entitled “The Hue and Cry.” She is the subject of the song, “Ask me no more,” &c. She is in “The Spark,” which refers to the Promethean Spark, or the poet’s life-spirit. She is seen in the poem entitled “The Incommunicability of Love;” and in the poem, “To one who, when I praised my Mistress’s Beauty, said I was blind.” She is in the song beginning, “Would you know what’s soft ?”

and in very many other poems where the unprepared general reader would not suspect it.

It is a point by no means to be overlooked, that while it is a primary object in the interpretation of mystical, or indeed of any writings whatever, to discover the *thought* of the writer, it is yet of indispensable necessity, for the security of one's own thinking, to bring the interpretation to the test of universal thought itself. We may perfectly recognize the thought of another without in any manner acquiescing in it, and self-protection requires the appeal to universal Truth to guard against being misled by the thought of another.

We reverse the order of Truth when we read with the assumption that a writing, or the thought of a writer, is true; yet, plainly, before we can ascertain the character of another man's thought we must discover the thought itself: and then, we repeat, it is altogether a separate inquiry to discover a true and reliable test for it; and here every student must appeal to God's Truth, for this is what books cannot teach. If, now, any one should ask, And what is God's Truth? the answer must be a re-affirmation, that it is God's Truth itself; for no

absurdity can parallel that of attempting to sustain Truth by anything short of Truth itself. To apply this to the writings of a poet or a philosopher, we must first discover the thought of the writer, and then, as a separate question, we must determine its value in reference to eternal Truth.

If the student cannot now be satisfied with this view, we must, for the present, refer him to a period later in life, when, perhaps, the mystic theory may seem less repugnant to the actualities of sense; or rather, when the sensuous nature itself may somewhat lose its tyrannical hold upon the life it imprisons.

CHAPTER IX.

WHY should not the truth, so far as the poets are concerned, be told on this as upon other subjects ! If the true is also the good, according to the declaration of poets and philosophers and no less of divines, why do writers perseveringly seek to mystify and hide it ? Is it because it is a gift, and must be found or received by each one for himself ? Let this be granted, and then we must ask, Are we aided in the pursuit of an obscure truth by books purposely written to hide that truth, and make it still more obscure ? Are men more likely to find it by *accident* when it is *purposely* hid under a bushel ?

This is not according to the teaching of old, if we may credit an ancient record, where we read : “neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”

Yet here, again, we meet with this very instruc-

tion in one of the most mystical of books, where the “Strange Shepherd” forms the very subject of a mystical history, to unveil which is held by many to be a most dangerous if not an unpardonable sin.

In view of so many difficulties, one is almost tempted to believe that all the books in the world, on one particular subject, have become, instead of helps to the truth, but so many hindrances, making the natural wilderness of the world darker in a ten-fold degree than it otherwise would be, insomuch that it becomes ten times a truth, that Truth itself is a divine gift, to which the natural or unassisted man can by no means attain: yet as despair is said to be the devil’s bait, the student must, on no account, give over his search, but should rather follow the example of Colin by taking a seat at the foot of Old Mole, that is, of Great Nature, on the ground, (by which so many writers figure humility,) and there, by a true practice upon his oaten reed, or Spirit of Truth, endeavor to bring to his assistance the Strange Shepherd, who may in due time make himself known as the only friend of man, not subject to be actually changed by being falsely written about; and if he should prove to be the bridegroom of Cynthia herself, let him be received, and honored

with her as the sacred double nature in one, of which man himself, and woman no less, is the “image humane” referred to in line 351 of the poem we have had under examination.

In the treatment we have given this subject, we consider that we have made an effort to rescue certain of the hermetic poets from the imputation of what ought to be regarded as an impious perversion of the divine gift, by many of the class, if the edge of criticism be not thus turned aside; for the simple reason, that where the whole power of the poet is exhausted in doing honor to human love, there can be no religious sentiment in the soul to be honored.

We urge that the entire vocabulary of Love is exhausted by the poets; and if woman was the sole object there could have been no object of religious love in the mind of the devotees; but let it be supposed that the poets had religious love in view, (we refer to those poets who were the authors of what must be called the love-literature of the middle age, and the period just following it, when Petrarch does not hesitate to compare Laura to Jesus Christ,) and we discover, by a very simple process of observation, the element in which the opposition to the *visible* church nursed itself until it ripened into the

Reformation. Love, as treated by this class of poets, was a form of religious devotion, carried on in a hermetic method as a protection against the persecutions of the Church. A religious sentiment was the animating spirit which easily became personified in lovely woman, because, next to God, she is in reality the true object of worship on earth ; but if woman becomes first in the order of the affections, love itself must soon become unlovely even in the eyes of its votaries. Hence the beauty of the declaration of one who perfectly understood the meaning of the word :

“ I could not love thee, dear ! so much,
 Lov’d I not honor more.”

We say then, that, among the poets who have given us what we think is best defined as love-literature, we must suppose that truth, the spirit of truth, in the sense of religion, must be considered as the object ; and the poems of those ages, embracing numberless sonnets, must be regarded as religious studies or contemplations, expressing more or less insight into nature,—the nature of God ; for nature is the nature of God.

A thoughtful student will find some confirmation

of this view by contrasting the metaphysical character of the literature of which we speak, its solemnity, reserve and stateliness, with the acknowledged love-writings of Burns, Moore, Byron, and other recent writers, who indeed, if we may credit public report, endangered their own salvation by sacrificing only at the altar of human beauty, in forgetfulness of what Sidney calls the “unspeakable and everlasting Beauty,” to which his own Sonnets were addressed under the figure of Stella.

We understand, therefore, that when Colin Clouts is led to speak of his individual love, as in lines from 464, the poet is not speaking of woman; but he is declaring his devotion to certain principles which represent to him immortal truth (line 257), and these also as they express a *unity* in the highest sense, that of the divine nature.

“Far be it (quoth Colin Clouts) from me,
That I of gentle maids should ill deserve :
For that myself I do profess to be
Vassal to one, whom all my days I serve ;
The beam of beauty sparkled from above,
The flower of virtue and pure chastity,
The blossom of sweet joy and perfect love,
The pearl of peerless grace and modesty :

To her my thoughts I daily dedicate,
 To her my heart I nightly martyrize :
 To her my love I lowly do prostrate,
 To her my life I wholly sacrifice :
 My thought, my heart, my love, *my life is she*,
 And I hers ever only, *ever one* :
 One ever I all vowed hers to be,
 One ever I, and others never none."

Let these lines be read with those from 330 to 351 of Colin Clouts, as Spenser's picture of a divine object, and then let them be compared to the 80th, 86th, and 105th Sonnets of Shakespeare :

80. "O, how I faint when I of you do write,
 Knowing a better spirit [that of Spenser?] doth use
 your name,
 And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
 To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame.
 But since your worth, wide as the ocean is,
 The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
 My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
 On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
 Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
 Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
 Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
 He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
 Then if he thrive, and I be cast away,
 The worst was this,—my love was my decay."

That is, his love of truth, goodness, God ; and to fall in that service was deemed an honor.

86. "Was it the proud full sail of his great verse—
no doubt referring to Spenser—

Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inherse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew ?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead ?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.

* * *

I was not sick of any fear from thence :
But *when your countenance filled up his line,*
Then lack'd I matter ; that enfeebled mine."

It was not, as we understand this Sonnet, that Shakespeare stood in fear of any mortal man, as a rival in doing honor to Love ; but when he saw, in the lines of Spenser, the evidence of a direct inspiration from Love itself, by seeing in the poet's lines the *countenance* of Love, then he felt himself abashed, or overawed ; not in a spirit of rivalry about a mortal being, as many suppose, but because he knew that without divine aid, or that direct in-

spiration invoked in his own 16th Sonnet, he would not be able to approach the perfection of Spenser's lines. Yet he even surpassed Spenser in the declaration of the *One*, in the unity of the beautiful, the good, and the true, as his 105th Sonnet will show.

Notwithstanding the unexpected length of these remarks, we must notice the fact that most of the *lovers*, whilst pursuing their inquiries, make very free accusations of infidelity against their mistresses. This only means, in reality, that Nature, according to her ancient name of Proteus, is exceedingly difficult to hold in any one position long enough to permit examination; for while the student, after much devotion, fancies he has obtained a true view, *presto!* all is changed and nothing appears as it did, nothing seems to have been accomplished.

This character of Nature is perfectly represented in the story of *The Man of Fifty*, in the 12th chapter of Meister's Travels, Carlyle's translation, in which the *widow* represents Nature; the *major*, intellect; and *Hillario*, faith. When the *young* intellect, the *major*'s son, acquaints the father with the state of the question between himself and the *widow*, and the father intimates doubts calculated

to calm the enthusiasm of the son, the answer is precisely true of Nature:

“ That is just her soft, silent, half-concealing, half-discovering way, by which you become certain of your wishes, and yet can never altogether get rid of doubt.”

And then the son describes, in transports, the beauty of the widow as she walked to and fro through the open doors, along the whole suite of chambers (or wherever Nature is seen), and adds:

“ If she was beautiful while moving under the blaze of the lusters [i. e., in open day], she was infinitely more so when illuminated by the soft gleam of the lamp,”

(To wit, the conscience), which is described as at the end of the hall in a small cabinet (the heart).

Every page of Meister’s Travels is hermetic, and as that style of writing is now but little known, it might be useful to have an edition of that wonderful work just sufficiently annotated to awaken attention.

The editors of the poets seem to attach much importance to the sonnets, as illustrating the biographies of the writers. This is a grievous mistake, if the sonnets are taken literally, as they universally

are. A shocking consequence appears in the case of Shakespeare, under the handling of nearly all of his editors, including Hallam himself.

The inferences from Shakespeare's 144th Sonnet are well known, nearly all of the editors accepting and repeating them to his disadvantage. Of course, we mean to the disadvantage of the reader; for Shakespeare is beyond the reach of mistakes with regard to himself. But the very same inferences may be made from Spenser's Sonnets: for example, the 10th, in which the poet accuses his lady of luxuriating

“in licentious bliss,
Of her freewill—”

calling her a “tyranness, rejoicing in the huge massacres which her eyes do make,” &c.; and in numerous Sonnets similar language is met with. Can the reader suppose this was addressed by Spenser to a lady whom he sought in marriage? Surely not; and how would a lady receive a Sonnet in which she is compared to a “panther,” using the arts detailed in the 53d Sonnet, and for the purpose therein set forth?

It was Nature that Spenser compared to a

panther, with a beautiful *outside*, from the seductions of which he cautioned himself, as in the 37th he warns himself against being entangled in the merely visible, compared to a *golden net*; and again, in the 47th Sonnet, he warns us not to trust

“The treason of those smiling looks,”

in the very same sense; these “smiling looks” being what Shakespeare calls “her pretty looks,” which he tells us had been “his enemies,” Sonnet 139.

Notwithstanding this *deceptive and crafty* outside, the poets saw in Nature all the beauty they were capable of conceiving.

Thus Carew, in the poem addressed to Celia, upon Love’s ubiquity, says:

“ You are my compass—

in reality addressing Nature—

and I never sound

Beyond your circle; neither can I show

Aught but what first expressed is in you,” &c.

And Shakespeare devotes a beautiful Sonnet to

the same purpose, making the same acknowledgment of his entire dependence upon Nature, as seen in the spirit :

“ Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace ;
But now my gracious numbers are decay’d,
And my sick muse doth give another place—

possibly referring to Spenser—

I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen ;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour ; beauty doth he give,
And found it in thy cheek ; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.

Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.”

What the poet here calls the *cheek* of his lady is the visible in nature, which, deceitful as it may be, furnishes poets with all possible images of beauty.

There is a poem composed for illustrating the Youth of Shakespeare, by the author of a work with this title, so exquisitely in keeping with the idea

that his lady-love was Nature, that we transfer it entire to these pages, and must then leave the reader to his own reflections. The poem is supposed to reflect the mind of Shakespeare.

THE POET'S SONG OF HIS SECRET LOVE.

1. Upon the dainty grass I lay me down,
Where tired of labor on my eyelids rest,
And then such glad solace I make my own
As none can know, for none can be so blessed.
For then my sweeting comes so gallantlie,
I cannot but conceive she loveth me.

2. I prythee tell me not of such bright fires,
As burn by day or night in yon fair skies:
For when I bring her to my chaste desires,
Sun, moon, and stars are shining in her eyes.
For then my sweeting so well-favoredlie
With heaven-like gaze declares she loveth me !

3. The tender blossoms blush upon their bowers,
The luscious fruit hangs trembling by the leaf:
But her rose-tinted cheek out-glowes all flowers,
Her cherry lips of fruits I prize the chief.
For then my sweeting so delightsomlie
Doth take her oath upon't she loveth me !

4. Alack, what pity 'tis, such moving sight
Should cheat my heart within an idle dream !
'Tis fantasy that brings such loving light—
The fruit I never taste—but only seem :
O would my sweeting in all honestie
Vouchsafe to give some sign she loveth me !

5. I take no pleasure now in pleasant sports,
I find no profit in books old or new ;
I hie me where my life's fair queen resorts,
For she's my pastime and my study too ;
And of my sweeting say I urgente lie,
What would I give to know she loveth me !

6. Yet though with her my heart so long hath been,
I know not she takes heed of my behoof ;
I gaze on her, yet care not to be seen—
I long to speak, and yet I keep aloof.
And whilst my sweeting fills my thoughts—perdie !
How oft I think—perchance she loveth me.

7. Where'er I turn methinks I see her face,
If any lovely thing can there be found ;
The air I breathe is haunted with her gracie,
And with her looks the flowers peep from the ground.
I pray my sweeting, very earnestlie,
She may incline to say she loveth me.

8. But when from all fair things I travel far,
Enwrapt within the shroud of darkest night;
She rises through the shadows like a star,
And with her beauty maketh the place bright.¹
And of my sweeting breathe I tenderlie,
Fortune be kind, and prove she loveth me.

Yes: we must add a few lines from George Withers, addressed expressly to his MUSE; and the reader is requested, after reading them, to turn to the 29th, 30th, and 31st Sonnets of Shakespeare, and observe how readily the inference follows that these were also addressed to the poet's MUSE.

“ She's my mind's companion still,
Spite of Envy's evil will;
She doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow;
Makes the desolatest place
To her presence be a grace;
And the blackest discontents
To be pleasing ornaments.
In my former days of bliss,
Her divine skill taught me this—
That from everything I saw
I could some invention draw,

¹ Vide Shakespeare's Sonnet, 27.

And raise pleasure to her height,
Through the meanest object's sight ;
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough rustleing,—
By a daisy whose leaves, spread,
Shut when Titan goes to bed,—
Or a shady bush or tree,—
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

A M O R E T T I,

OR

SONNETS.

BY EDM. SPENSER.

NOTE BY PREVIOUS EDITORS.

The *Amoretti*, or *Sonnets*, describe the commencement and progress of Spenser's love for the lady whom he married, which event is made the subject of the *Epithalamion* which follows. All we know of her is, that her name was Elizabeth, as appears from the seventy-fourth Sonnet. In the sixtieth Sonnet, he informs us that he was then forty years old, and that a year had passed since the commencement of his passion. These Sonnets are interesting, as illustrating the biography of the poet; and they are also remarkable for that purity and delicacy of feeling so characteristic of Spenser, into the sanctuary of whose mind no coarse or unhandsome image ever intruded itself. But their literary merit is not more than respectable, and in no form of poetical composition is mediocrity less tolerable than the sonnet. They are not free from the cold conceits of his age, and their monotonous and languid flow of sentiment is seldom enlivened by rich poetry, or any uncommon beauty of language. They naturally provoke a comparison with Shakspeare's Sonnets, to which they are greatly inferior.

[The author of these remarks dissents from the opinion here expressed, and refers to his remarks for his reasons.]

G. W. SENIOR,*

TO THE AUTHOR.

DARKE is the day, when Phœbus face is shrouded,
And weaker sights may wander soone astray :
But, when they see his glorious rays unclouded,
With steddy steps they keep the perfect way :
So, while this Muse in forraine land doth stay,
Invention weeps, and pens are cast aside ;
The time, like night, depriv'd of chearfull day ;
And few do write, but (ah !) too soon may slide
Then, hie thee home, that art our perfect guide,
And with thy wit illustrate England's fame,
Daunting thereby our neighbours ancient pride,
That do, for Poesie, challenge chiefest name :

So we that live, and ages that succeed,
With great applause thy learned works shall read.

AH ! Colin, whether on the lowly plaine,
Piping to shepherds thy sweet roundelayes ;
Or whether singing, in some lofty vaine,
Heroicke deeds of past or present days ;

* "Perhaps George Whetstone, a poetaster and dramatic writer, in the reign of Elizabeth."—TODD.

Or whether, in thy lovely Mistresse praise,
Thou list to exercise thy learned quill ;
Thy Muse hath got such grace and power to please,
With rare invention, beautified by skill,
As who therein can ever ioy their fill !
O ! therefore let that happy Muse proceed
To clime the height of Vertues sacred hill,
Where endlesse honour shall be made thy meed :
Because no malice of succeeding daies
Can rase those records of thy lasting praise.

G. W. JUNR.

AMORETTI,

OR

SONNETS.

I.

HAPPY, ye leaves! when as those lilly hands,
Which hold my life in their dead-doing might,
Shall handle you, and hold in loves soft bands,
Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight.
And happy lines! on which, with starry light,
Those lamping eyes will deigne sometimes to look,
And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,
Written ^{*} with teares in harts close-bleeding book.
And happy rymes! bath'd in the sacred brooke
Of Helicon, whence she derived is;
When ye behold that Angels blessed looke,
My soules long-lacked food, my heavens blis;
Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none!

Vide REMARKS, pp. 95, 102.

II.

Unquiet thought! whom at the first I bred
Of th' inward bale of my love-pined hart;
And sithens¹ have with sighes and sorrowes fed,
Till greater than my wombe thou woxen art:
Breake forth at length out of th' inner part,
In which thou lurkest lyke to vipers brood ;
And seeke some succour both to ease my smart,
And also to sustayne thy selfe with food.
But, if in presence of that fayrest Proud
Thou chance to come, fall lowly at her feet ;
And, with meek humblesse and afflicted mood,
Pardon for thee, and grace for me, intreat:
Which if she graunt, then live, and my love cherish :
If not, die soone ; and I with thee will perish.

¹ *Sithens*, since that time.

III.

The soverayne beauty which I doo admyre,
Witnessse the world how worthy to be prayzed !
The light wherof hath kindled heavenly fyre
In my fraile spirit, by her from basenesse raysed ;
That being now with her huge brightnesse dazed,¹
Base thing I can no more endure to view :
But, looking still on her, I stand amazed
At wondrous sight of so celestiall hew.
So when my toung would speak her praises dew,
It stopped is with thoughts astonishment ;
And, when my pen would write her titles true,
It ravisht is with fancies wonderment :
Yet in my hart I then both speak and write
The wonder that my wit cannot endite.

¹ *Dazed*, dazzled.

IV.

New yeare, forth looking out of Ianus gate,
Doth seeme to promise hope of new delight:
And, bidding th' old adieu, his passed date
Bids all old thoughts to die in dumpish¹ spright:
And, calling forth out of sad Winters night
Fresh Love, that long hath slept in cheerlesse bower,
Wils him awake, and soone about him dight
His wanton wings and darts of deadly power.
For lusty Spring now in his timely howre
Is ready to come forth, him to receive;
And warns the Earth with divers-colord flowre
To decke hir selfe, and her faire mantle weave.
Then you, faire flowre! in whom fresh youth doth raine,
Prepare your selfe new love to entertaine.

¹ *Dumpish*, mournful.

V.

Rudely thou wrongest my deare harts desire,
In finding fault with her too portly pride:
The thing which I doo most in her admire,
Is of the world unworthy most envide:
For in those lofty lookes is close implide,
Scorn of base things, and sdeigne of foul dishonor;
Thretning rash eies which gaze on her so wide,
That loosely they ne dare to looke upon her.
Such pride is praise; such portlinesse is honor;
That boldned innoeence beares in hir eies;
And her faire countenance, like a goodly banner,
Spreds in defiaunce of all enemies.

Was never in this world ought worthy tride,
Without some spark of such self-pleasing pride.

VI.

Be nought dismayd that her unmoved mind
Doth still persist in her rebellious pride:
Such love, not lyke to lusts of baser kynd,
The harder wonne, the firmer will abide.

The durefull oake, whose sap is not yet dride,
Is long ere it conceive the kindling fyre;
But, when it once doth burne, it doth divide
Great heat, and makes his flames to heaven aspire.

So hard it is to kindle new desire
In gentle brest, that shall endure for ever:
Deepe is the wound, that dints the parts entire
With chaste affects, that naught but death can sever.

Then thinke not long in taking little paine
To knit the knot, that ever shall remaine.

VII.

Fayre eyes! the myrrour of my mazed hart,
What wondrous vertue is contayn'd in you,
The which both lyfe and death forth from you dart
Into the obiect of your mighty view?
For, when ye mildly looke with lovely hew,
Then is my soule with life and love inspired:
But when ye lowre, or looke on me askew,
Then do I die, as one with lightning fyred.
But, since that lyfe is more then death desyred,
Looke ever lovely, as becomes you best;
That your bright beams, of my weak eies admyrede,
May kindle living fire within my brest.
Such life should be the honor of your light,
Such death the sad ensample of your might.

VIII.

More then most faire, full of the living fire,
Kindled above unto the Maker nere;
No eies but ioyes, in which al powers conspire,
That to the world naught else be counted deare.
Thruh your bright beams doth not the blinded guest
Shoot out his darts to base affections wound;
But Angels come to lead fraile mindes to rest
In chast desires, on heavenly beauty bound.
You frame my thoughts, and fashion me within;
You stop my toungh, and teach my hart to speake;
You calme the storme that passion did begin,
Strong thruh your cause, but by your vertue weak.
Dark is the world, where your light shined never;
Well is he borne, that may behold you ever.

IX.

Long-while I sought to what I might compare
Those powrefull eies, which lighten my dark spright:
Yet find I nought on earth, to which I dare
Resemble th' ymage of their goodly light.
Not to the Sun; for they doo shine by night;
Nor to the Moone; for they are changed never;
Nor to the Starres; for they have purer sight;
Nor to the Fire; for they consume not ever;
Nor to the Lightning; for they still persever;
Nor to the Diamond; for they are more tender;
Nor unto Cristall; for nought may them sever;
Nor unto Glasse; such basenesse mought offend her.

Then to the Maker selfe they likest be,
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

Vide REMARKS, p. 36.

X.

Unrighteous Lord of love, what law is this,
That me thou makest thus tormented be,
The whiles she lordeth in licentious blisse
Of her freewill, scorning both thee and me ?
See ! how the Tyrannesse doth ioy to see
The hugh massacres which her eyes do make ;
And humbled harts brings captive unto thee,
That thou of them mayst mightie vengeance take.
But her proud hart doe thou a little shake,
And that high look, with which she doth comptroll
All this worlds pride, bow to a baser make,
And al her faults in thy black booke enroll :
That I may laugh at her in equall sort,
As she doth laugh at me, and makes my pain her sport.

XI.

Dayly when I do seeke and sew for peace,
And hostages doe offer for my truth ;
She, cruell warriour, doth her selfe addresse
To battell, and the weary war renew'th ;
Ne wilbe moov'd with reason, or with rewth,¹
To graunt small respit to my restlesse toile ;
But greedily her fell intent poursewth,
Of my poore life to make unpittied spoile.
Yet my poore life, all sorrowes to assoyle,²
I would her yield, her wrath to pacify :
But then she seeks, with torment and turmoyle,
To force me live, and will not let me dy.

All paine hath end, and every war hath peace ;
But mine, no price nor prayer may surcease.

¹ *Rewth, ruth, pity.*

² *Assoyle, remove.*

XII.

One day I sought with her hart-thrilling eies
To make a truce, and termes to entertaine;
All fearlesse then of so false enimies,
Which sought me to entrap in treasons traine.
So, as I then disarmed did remaine,
A wicked ambush which lay hidden long,
In the close covert of her guilful eyen,
Thence breaking forth, did thick about me throng.
Too feeble I t' abide the brunt so strong,
Was forst to yield my selfe into their hands;
Who, me captiving streight with rigorous wrong,
Have ever since kept me in cruell bands.
So, Ladie, now to you I doo complaine,
Against your eies, that iustice I may gaine.

XIII.

In that proud port, which her so goodly graceth,
Whiles her faire face she reares up to the skie,
And to the ground her eie-lids low embaseth,
Most goodly temperature ye may descry ;
Myld humblesse, mixt with awfull maiestie.

For, looking on the earth whence she was borne,
Her minde remembreth her mortalitie,
Whatso is fayrest shall to earth returne.

But that same lofty countenance seemes to scorne
Base thing, and thinke how she to heaven may clime ;
Treading downe earth as lothsome and forlorne,
That hinders heavenly thoughts with drossy slime.

Yet lowly still vouchsafe to looke on me ;
Such lowlinesse shall make you lofty be.

Vide REMARKS, p. 118.

XIV.

Retourne agayne, my forces late dismayd,
Unto the siege by you abandon'd quite.
Great shame it is to leave, like one afayd,
So fayre a peece,¹ for one repulse so light.
'Gainst such strong castles needeth greater might
Then those small forts which ye were wont belay:²
Such haughty mynds, enur'd to hardy fight,
Disdayne to yield unto the first assay.
Bring therefore all the forces that ye may,
And lay incessant battery to her heart;
Playnts, prayers, vowes, ruth, sorrow, and dismay;
Those engins can the proudest love convert:
And, if those fayle, fall down and dy before her;
So dying live, and living to adore her.

¹ *Peece*, castle.

² *Belay*, place in ambush.

XV.

Ye tradefull Merchants, that, with weary toyle,
Do seeke most pretious things to make your gain;
And both the Indias of their treasure spoile;
What needeth you to seeke so farre in vaine?
For loe, my Love doth in her selfe containe
All this worlds riches that may farre be found:
If Saphyres, loe, her eies be Saphyres plaine;
If Rubies, loe, hir lips be Rubies sound;
If Pearles, hir teeth be Pearles, both pure and round;
If Yvorie, her forehead Yvory weene;
If Gold, her locks are finest Gold on ground;
If Silver, her faire hands are Silver sheene:¹
But that which fairest is, but few behold,
Her mind adornd with vertues manifold.

¹ *Sheene*, bright.

XVI.

One day as I unwarily did gaze
On those fayre eyes, my loves immortall light;
The whilst my stonisht hart stood in amaze,
Through sweet illusion of her lookes delight;
I mote perceive how, in her glauncing sight,
Legions of Loves with little wings did fly ;
Darting their deadly arrows, fyry bright,
At every rash beholder passing by.
One of those archers closely I did spy,
Ayming his arrow at my very hart :
When suddenly, with twinkle of her eye,
The Damzell broke his misintended dart.
Had she not so doon, sure I had bene slayne ;
Yet as it was, I hardly scap't with paine.

XVII.

The glorious pourtraict of that Angels face,
Made to amaze weake mens confused skil,
And this worlds worthlesse glory to embase,
What pen, what pencill, can expresse her fill?
For though he colours could devise at will,
And eke his learned hand at pleasure guide,
Least, trembling, it his workmanship should spill;¹
Yet many wondrous things there are beside:
The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide;
The charming smiles, that rob sence from the hart;
The lovely pleasance; and the lofty pride;
Cannot expressed be by any art.

A greater craftesmans hand thereto doth neede,
That can expresse the life of things indeed.

¹ *Spill*, spoil.

XVIII.

The rolling wheele that runneth often round,
The hardest steele, in tract of time doth teare:
And drizling drops, that often doe redound,
The firmest flint doth in continuance weare:
Yet cannot I, with many a drooping teare
And long intreaty, soften her hard hart;
That she will once vouchsafe my plaint to heare,
Or looke with pitty on my payneful smart.
But, when I pleade, she bids me play my part;
And, when I weep, she sayes, Teares are but water;
And, when I sigh, she sayes, I know the art;
And, when I waile, she turnes hir selfe to laughter.
So do I weepe, and wayle, and pleade in vaine,
Whiles she as steele and flint doth still remayne.

XIX.

The merry Cuckow, messenger of Spring,
His trumpet shrill hath thrise already sounded,
That warnes al Lovers wayte upon their king,
Who now is coming forth with girlond crouned.
With noyse whereof the quyre of Byrds resounded
Their anthemes sweet, devized of loves prayse,
That all the woods theyr echoes back rebounded,
As if they knew the meaning of their layes.
But mongst them all, which did Loves honor rayse,
No word was heard of her that most it ought;
But she his precept proudly disobayes,
And doth his ydle message set at nought.
Therefore, O Love, unlesse she turne to thee
Ere Cuckow end, let her a rebell be!

XX.

In vaine I seeke and sew to her for grace,
And doe myne humbled hart before her poure;
The whiles her foot she in my necke doth place,
And tread my life downe in the lowly floure.¹
And yet the lyon that is lord of power,
And reigneth over every beast in field,
In his most pride disdeigneth to devoure
The silly lambe that to his might doth yield.
But she, more cruell, and more salvage wylde,
Than either lyon, or the lyonesse,
Shames not to be with guiltlesse bloud defylde,
But taketh glory in her cruelnesse.

Fayrer then fayrest! let none ever say,
That ye were blooded in a yeelded pray.

¹ *Floure*, floor, ground.

XXI.

Was it the worke of Nature or of Art,
Which tempred so the feature of her face,
That pride and meeknesse, mixt by equall part,
Doe both appeare t' adorne her beauties grace ?
For with mild pleasance, which doth pride displace,
She to her love doth lookers eyes allure ;
And, with stern countenance, back again doth chace
Their looser lookes that stir up lustes impure ;
With such strange termes her eyes she doth inure,
That, with one looke, she doth my life dismay ;
And with another doth it streight recure ;
Her smile me drawes ; her frowne me drives away.
Thus doth she traine and teach me with her lookes ;
Such art of eyes I never read in bookes !

XXII.

This holy season, fit to fast and pray,
Men to devotion ought to be inclyned:
Therefore, I likewise, on so holy day,
For my sweet Saynt some service fit will find.
Her temple fayre is built within my mind,
In which her glorious ymage placed is;
On which my thoughts doo day and night attend,
Lyke sacred Priests that never thinke amisse;
There I to her, as th' author of my blisse,
Will builde an altar to appease her yre;
And on the same my hart will sacrifice,
Burning in flames of pure and chaste desyre:
The which vouchsafe, O Goddesse, to accept,
Amongst thy deerest relicks to be kept.

XXIII.

Penelope, for her Ulisses sake,
Deviz'd a Web her wooers to deceave;
In which the worke that she all day did make,
The same at night she did againe unreave:
Such subtile craft my Damzell doth conceave,
Th' importune suit of my desire to shonne:
For all that I in many dayes do weave,
In one short houre I find by her undonne.
So, when I thinke to end that I begonne,
I must begin and never bring to end:
For, with one looke, she spils¹ that long I sponne;
And, with one word, my whole years work doth rend.
Such labour like the spyders web I fynd,
Whose fruitlesse worke is broken with least wynd.

¹ Spils, spoils.

XXIV.

When I behold that beauties wonderment,
And rare perfection of each goodly part;
Of Natures skill the onely complement;
I honor and admire the Makers art.

But when I feele the bitter balefull smart,
Which her fayre eyes unwares doe worke in mee,
That death out of theyr shiny beames doe dart;
I thinke that I a new Pandora see,
Whom all the gods in councell did agree
Into this sinfull world from heaven to send;
That she to wicked men a scourge should bee,
For all their faults with which they did offend.

But, since ye are my scourge, I will intreat,
That for my faults ye will me gently beat.

XXV.

How long shall this lyke dying lyfe endure,
And know no end of her owne mysery,
But wast and weare away in termes unsure,
'Twixt feare and hope depending doubtfully!
Yet better were attonce to let me die,
And shew the last ensample of your pride;
Then to torment me thus with cruelty,
To prove your powre, which I too wel have tride.
But yet if in your hardned brest ye hide
A close intent at last to shew me grace;
Then all the woes and wrecks, which I abide,
As meanes of blisse I gladly wil embrace;
And wish that more and greater they might be,
That greater meede at last may turne to mee.

XXVI.

Sweet is the Rose, but growes upon a brere;
Sweet is the Iunipeer, but sharpe his bough;
Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh nere;
Sweet is the Firbloome, but his braunches rough;
Sweet is the Cypresse, but his rynd is rough;
Sweet is the Nut, but bitter is his pill;
Sweet is the Broome-flowre, but yet sowre enough;
And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill.
So every sweet with soure is tempred still,
That maketh it be coveted the more:
For easie things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men doe set but little store.

Why then should I accompt of little paine,
That endlesse pleasure shall unto me gaine!

XXVII.

Faire Proud! now tell me, why should faire be proud,
Sith¹ all worlds glorie is but drosse uncleane,
And in the shade of death it selfe shall shroud,
However now thereof ye little weene!
That goodly Idoll, now so gay beseene,
Shall doffe² her fleshes borrowd fayre attyre;
And be forgot as it had never beene;
That many now much worship and admire!
Ne any then shall after it inquire,
Ne any mention shall thereof remaine,
But what this verse, that never shall expyre,
Shall to you purchas with her thankles pain!
Faire! be no lenger proud of that shall perish ;
But that, which shall you make immortall, cherish

¹ *Sith*, since.

² *Doffe*, put off.

XXVIII.

The laurel-leafe, which you this day doe weare,
Gives me great hope of your relenting mynd:
For since it is the badge which I doe beare,
Ye, bearing it, doe seeme to me inclind:
The powre thereof, which ofte in me I find,
Let it lykewise your gentle brest inspire
With sweet infusion, and put you in mind
Of that proud Mayd, whom now those leaves attyre:
Proud Daphne, scorning Phœbus lovely fyre,
On the Thessalian shore from him did flie:
For which the gods, in theyr revengefull yre,
Did her transforme into a Laurell-tree.

Then fly no more, fayre Love, from Phebus chace,
But in your brest his leafe and love embrace.

XXIX.

See! how the stubborne Damzell doth deprave
My simple meaning with disdaynfull scorne;
And by the bay, which I unto her gave,
Accoumpts my self her captive quite forlorne.

The bay, quoth she, is of the victours born,
Yielded them by the vanquisht as theyr meeds,
And they therewith doe Poetes heads adorne,
To sing the glory of their famous deeds.

But sith¹ she will the conquest challeng needs,
Let her accept me as her faithfull thrall;
That her great triumph, which my skill exceeds,
I may in trump of fame blaze over all.

Then would I decke her head with glorious bayes,
And fill the world with her victorious prayse.

¹ *Sith*, since.

XXX.

My Love is lyke to yse, and I to fyre;
How comes it then that this her cold so great
Is not dissolv'd through my so hot desyre,
But harder growes the more I her intreat!
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat
Is not delayd¹ by her hart-frosen cold;
But that I burne much more in boyling sweat,
And feele my flames augmented manifold!
What more miraculous thing may be told,
That fire, which all things melts, should harden yse;
And yse, which is congeald with sencelesse cold,
Should kindle fyre by wonderful devyse!
Such is the powre of love in gentle mind,
That it can alter all the course of kynd.

¹ *Delayd*, tempered.

XXXI.

Ah! why hath Nature to so hard a hart
Given so goodly giftes of beauties grace!
Whose pryde depraves each other better part,
And all those pretious ornaments deface.
Sith¹ to all other beastes, of bloody race,
A dreadfull countenance she given hath;
That with theyr terrour all the rest may chace,
And warne to shun the daunger of theyr wrath.
But my proud one doth worke the greater scath,²
Through sweet allurement of her lovely hew;
That she the better may, in bloody bath
Of such poore thralls, her cruell hands embrew.
But, did she know how ill these two accord,
Such cruelty she would have soone abhord.

¹ *Sith*, since.

² *Scath*, injury.

XXXII.

The payrefull smith, with force of fervent heat,
The hardest yron soone doth mollify ;
That with his heavy sledge he can it beat,
And fashion to what he it list apply.
Yet cannot all these flames, in which I fry,
Her hart more hard then yron soft a whit ;
Ne all the playnts and prayers, with which I
Doe beat on th' andvile of her stubberne wit ;
But still, the more she fervent sees my fit,
The more she rieseth in her wilfull pryde ;
And harder growes, the harder she is smit
With all the playnts which to her be applyde.
What then remaines but I to ashes burne,
And she to stones at length all frozen turne !

XXXIII.

Great wrong I doe, I can it not deny,
To that most sacred Empresse, my dear dred,
Not finishing her Queene of Faëry,
That mote enlarge her living prayses, dead :
But Lodwick, this of grace to me aread;¹
Do ye not thinck th' accomplishment of it,
Sufficient worke for one[¶] mans simple head,
All were it, as the rest, but rudely writ?
How then should I, without another wit,
Thinck ever to endure so tedious toyle!
Sith² that this one is tost with troublous fit
Of a proud Love, that doth my spirite spoyle.

Cease then, till she vouchsafe to grawnt me rest;
Or lend you me another living brest.

¹ *Aread*, explain.

² *Sith*, since.

XXXIII. 5.—*Lodwick.*] Lodowick Bryskett, a friend of Spenser and himself a poet.

XXXIV.

Lyke as a ship, that through the ocean wyde,
By conduct of some star, doth make her way;
Whenas a storm hath dimd her trusty guyde,
Out of her course doth wander far astray!
So I, whose star, that wont with her bright ray
Me to direct, with cloudes is over-cast,
Doe wander now, in darknesse and dismay,
Through hidden perils round about me plast;
Yet hope I well that, when this storme is past,
My Helice, the lodestar of my lyfe,
Will shine again, and looke on me at last,
With lovely light to eleare my cloudy grief.
Till then I wander carefull, comfortlesse,
In secret sorrow, and sad pensiveness.

XXXV.

My hungry eyes, through greedy covetize
Still to behold the obiect of their paine,
With no contentment can themselves suffize ;
But, having, pine ; and, having not, complaine.
For, lacking it, they cannot lyfe sustayne ;
And, having it, they gaze on it the more ;
In their amazement lyke Narcissus vaine,
Whose eyes him starv'd : so plenty makes me poore.
Yet are mine eyes so filled with the store
Of that faire sight, that nothing else they brooke,
But lothe the things which they did like before,
And can no more endure on them to looke.
All this worlds glory seemeth vayne to me,
And all their showes but shadowes, saving she.

XXXVI.

Tell me, when shall these wearie woes have end,
Or shall their ruthlesse torment never cease ;
But al my days in pining languor spend,
Without hope of asswagement or release ?
Is there no meanes for me to purchase peace,
Or make agreement with her thrilling eyes ;
But that their cruelty doth still increace,
And dayly more augment my miseryes ?
But, when ye have shew'd all extremityes,
Then think how little glory ye have gayned
By slaying him, whose lyfe, though ye despysse,
Mote have your life in honor long maintayned.
But by his death, which some perhaps will mone,
Ye shall condemned be of many a one.

XXXVII.

What guyle is this, that those her golden tresses
She doth attyre under a net of gold;
And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,
That which is gold, or haire, may scarce be told?
Is it that mens fraile eyes, which gaze too bold,
She may entangle in that golden snare;
And, being caught, may craftily enfold
Their weaker harts, which are not wel aware?
Take heed therefore, myne eyes, how ye doe stare
Henceforth too rashly on that guilefull net,
In which if ever ye entrapped are,
Out of her bands ye by no meanes shall get.

Fondnesse¹ it were for any, being free,
To covet fetters though they golden bee,

¹ *Fondnesse*, folly.

XXXVIII.

Arion, when, through tempests cruel wracke,
He forth was thrown into the greedy seas;
Through the sweet musick, which his harp did make,
Allur'd a dolphin him from death to ease.
But my rude musick, which was wont to please
Some dainty eares, cannot, with any skill,
The dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,
Nor move the dolphin from her stubborn will;
But in her pride she dooth persever still,
All carelesse how my life for her decayes:
Yet with one word she can it save or spill.
To spill were pitty, but to save were prayse!
Chuse rather to be praysd for doing good,
Then to be blam'd for spilling guiltlesse blood.

XXXIX.

Sweet smile! the daughter of the Queene of Love,
Expressing all thy mothers powrefull art,
With which she wonts to temper angry Iove,
When all the gods he threats with thundring dart:
Sweet is thy vertue, as thy selfe sweet art.
For, when on me thou shinedst late in sadnessse,
A melting pleasance ran through every part,
And me revived with hart-robbing gladnesse.
Whylest rapt with ioy resembling heavenly madness,
My soule was ravisht quite as in a traunce;
And, feeling thence no more her sorrowes sadnessse,
Fed on the fulnesse of that clearfull glaunce.
More sweet than nectar, or ambrosiall meat,
Seem'd every bit which thenceforth I did eat.

XL.

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye lyken it ;
When on each eyelid sweetly doe appeare
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Lykest it seemeth, in my simple wit,
Unto the fayre sunshine in somers day ;
That, when a dreadfull storme away is flit,
Thruh the broad world doth spred his goodly ray ;
At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
And every beast that to his den was fled,
Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
And to the light lift up their drouping hed.
So my storme-beaten hart likewise is cheared
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are cleared.

XLI.

Is it her nature, or is it her will,
To be so cruell to an humbled foe?
If nature; then she may it mend with skill:
If will; then she at will may will forgoe.
But if her nature and her will be so,
That she will plague the man that loves her most,
And take delight t' encrease a wretches woe;
Then all her natures goodly guifts are lost:
And that same glorious beauties ydle boast
Is but a bayt such wretches to beguile,
As, being long in her loves tempest tost,
She meanes at last to make her pitious spoyle.
O fayrest fayre! let never it be named,
That so fayre beauty was so fowly shamed.

XLII.

The love, which me so cruelly tormenteth,
So pleasing is in my extreamest paine,
That, all the more my sorrow it augmenteth,
The more I love and doe embrace my bane.
Ne do I wish (for wishing were but vaine)
To be acquit fro my continual smart ;
But ioy, her thrall for ever to remayne,
And yield for pledge my poor and captiyved hart ;
The which, that it from her may never start,
Let her, yf please her, bynd with adamant chayne,
And from all wandring loves, which mote pervert
His safe assurance, strongly it restrayne.
Onely let her abstaine from cruelty,
And doe me not before my time to dy.

XLIII.

Shall I then silent be, or shall I speake?
And, if I speake, her wrath renew I shall;
And, if I silent be, my hart will breake,
Or choked be with overflowing gall.
What tyranny is this, both my hart to thrall,
And eke my toungh with proud restraint to tie;
That neither I may speake nor thinke at all,
But like a stupid stock in silence die !
Yet I my hart with silence secretly
Will teach to speak, and my just cause to plead;
And eke mine eies, with meek humility,
Love-learned letters to her eyes to read;
Which her deep wit, that true harts thought can spel,
Wil soon conceive, and learne to construe well.

Vide REMARKS, p. 112.

*

XLIV.

When those renoumed noble Peres of Greece,
Through stubborn pride, among themselves did iar,
Forgetfull of the famous golden fleece;
Then Orpheus with his harp theyr strife did bar.
But this continuall, cruell, civil warre,
The which my selfe against my selfe doe make;
Whilst my weak powres of passions warreid arre;
No skill can stint, nor reason can aslake.
But, when in hand my tunelesse harp I take,
Then doe I more augment my foes despight;
And grieve renew, and passions doe awake
To battaile, fresh against my selfe to fight.
Mongst whome the more I seeke to settle peace,
The more I fynd their malice to increace.

XLV.

Leave, Lady! in your glasse of cristall clene,
Your goodly selfe for evermore to vew:
And in my selfe, my inward selfe, I meane,
Most lively lyke behold your semblant trew.
Within my hart, though hardly it can shew
Thing so divine to vew of earthly eye,
The fayre idea of your celestiall hew
And every part remaines immortally:
And were it not that, through your cruelty,
With sorrow dimmed and deform'd it were,
The goodly ymage of your visnomy¹;
Clearer than cristall, would therein appere.

But, if your selfe in me ye playne will see, [be.
Remove the cause by which your fayre beames darkned

Vide REMARKS, p. 127.

¹ *Visnomy*, countenance.

XLVI.

When my abodes prefixed time is spent,
My cruell fayre streight bids me wend my way:
But then from heaven most hideous stormes are sent,
As willing me against her will to stay.
Whom then shall I, or heaven or her, obey?
The heavens know best what is the best for me:
But as she will, whose will my life doth sway,
My lower heaven, so it perforce must be.
But ye high hevens, that all this sorowe see,
Sith¹ all your tempests cannot hold me backe,
Aswage your storms; or else both you, and she,
Will both together me too sorely wrack.
Enough it is for one man to sustaine
The stormes, which she alone on me doth raine.

Vide REMARKS, p. 134.

¹ *Sith*, since.

XLVII.

Trust not the treason of those smyling lookes,
Untill ye have their guylefull traynes well tryde:
For they are lyke but unto golden hookes,
That from the foolish fish theyr bayts do hyde:
So she with flattring smyles weake harts doth guyde
Unto her love, and tempte to theyr decay;
Whome, being caught, she kills with cruell pryde,
And feeds at pleasure on the wretched pray:
Yet, even whylst her bloody hands them slay,
Her eyes looke lovely, and upon them smyle;
That they take pleasure in their cruell play,
And, dying, doe themselves of payne beguyle.

O mighty charm! which makes men love theyr bane,
And thinck they dy with pleasure, live with payne.

Vide REMARKS, p. 123.

XLVIII.

Innocent paper! whom too cruell hand
Did make the matter to avenge her yre;
And, ere she could thy cause well understand,
Did sacrificize unto the greedy fyre.

Well worthy thou to have found better hyre,
Then so bad end for hereticks ordayned;
Yet heresy nor treason didst conspire,
But plead thy Maisters cause, unjustly payned.

Whom she, all carelesse of his grief, constrainyd
To utter forth the anguish of his hart:
And would not heare, when he to her complayned
The piteous passion of his dying smart.

Yet live for ever, though against her will,
And speake her good, though she requite it ill.

XLIX.

Fayre Cruell! why are ye so fierce and cruell?
Is it because your eyes have powre to kill?
Then know that mercy is the Mighties iewell;
And greater glory think to save then spill.
But if it be your pleasure, and proud will,
To shew the powre of your imperious eyes;
Then not on him that never thought you ill,
But bend your force against your enemyes:
Let them feel the utmost of your cruelties;
And kill with looks, as cockatrices do:
But him, that at your footstoole humbled lies,
With mercifull regard give mercy to.

Such mercy shall you make admir'd to be;
So shall you live, by giving life to me.

L.

Long languishing in double malady
Of my harts wound, and of my bodies griefe ;
There came to me a Leach, that would apply
Fit medicines for my bodies best relieve.
Vayne man, quoth I, that hast but little priefe ¹
In deep discovery of he mynds disease ;
Is not the hart of all the body chiefe,
And rules the members as it selfe doth please ?
Then, with some cordialls, seeke for to appease
The inward languor of my wounded hart ;
And then my body shall have shortly ease :
But such sweet cordialls passe Physicians art.

Then, my lyfes Leach ! doe you your skill reveale ;
And, with one salve, both hart and body heale.

¹ *Priefe*, proof, skill.

LI.

Doe I not see that fayrest ymages
Of hardest marble are of purpose made,
For that they should endure through many ages,
Ne let theyr famous moniments to fade?
Why then do I, untrainde in Lovers trade,
Her hardnes blame, which I should more commend?
Sith¹ never ought was excellent assayde
Which was not hard t' atchive and bring to end.
Ne ought so hard, but he, that would attend,
Mote soften it and to his will allure:
So do I hope her stubborne hart to bend,
And that it then more stedfast will endure.

Only my paines wil be the more to get her;
But, having her, my ioy wil be the greater.

¹ *Sith*, since.

LII.

So oft as homeward I from her depart,
I go lyke one that, having lost the field,
Is prisoner led away with heavy hart,
Despoyld of warlike armes and knownen shield.
So doe I now my self a prisoner yield
To sorrow and to solitary paine;
From presence of my dearest deare exylde,
Long-while alone in languor to remaine.
There let no thought of ioy, or pleasure vaine,
Dare to approch, that may my solace breed;
But sudden dumps,¹ and drery sad disdayne
Of all worlds gladnesse, more my torment feed.
So I her absens will my penaunce make,
That of her presens I my meed may take.

¹ *Dumps*, lamentations.

LIII.

The panther, knowing that his spotted hyde
Doth please all beasts, but that his looks them fray;
Within a bush his dreadful head doth hide,
To let them gaze, whylst he on them may pray:
Right so my cruell fayre with me doth play;
For, with the goodly semblance of her hew,
She doth allure me to mine owne decay,
And then no mercy will unto me shew.
Great shame it is, thing so divine in view,
Made for to be the worlds most ornament,
To make the bayte her gazers to embrew:
Good shames to be to ill an instrument!
But mercy doth with beautie best agree,
As in theyr Maker ye them best may see.

*
Vide REMARKS, p. 122.

¹ *Fray*, terrify.

LIV.

Of this worlds Theatre in which we stay,
My Love, like the Spectator, ydly sits ;
Beholding me, that all the Pageants play,
Disguysing diversly my troubled wits.
Sometimes I ioy when glad occasion fits,
And mask in myrth lyke to a Comedy :
Soone after, when my ioy to sorrow flits,
I waile, and make my woes a Tragedy.
Yet she, beholding me with constant eye,
Delights not in my merth, nor rues my smart :
But, when I laugh, she mocks ; and, when I cry,
She laughs, and hardens evermore her hart.
What then can move her ? if nor merth, nor mone,
She is no woman, but a sencelesse stone.

LV.

So oft as I her beauty doe behold,
And therewith doe her cruelty compare,
I marvaile of what substance was the mould,
The which her made attonce so cruell faire.
Not earth; for her high thoughts more heavenly are:
Not water; for her love doth burne like fyre:
Not ayre; for she is not so light or rare:
Not fyre; for she doth friese with faint desire.
Then needs another Element inquire
Whereof she mote be made; that is, the skye.
For, to the heaven her haughty looks aspire;
And eke her love is pure immortall hye.
Then, sith to heaven ye lykened are the best,
Be lyke in mercy as in all the rest.

Vide REMARKS, p. 121.

LVI.

Fayre ye be sure, but cruell and unkind,
As is a tygre, that with greedinesse
Hunts after bloud; when he by chance doth find
A feeble beast, doth felly him oppresse.
Fayre be ye sure, but proud and pitilesse,
As is a storme, that all things doth prostrate;
Finding a tree alone all comfortlesse,
Beats on it strongly, it to ruinate.
Fayre be ye sure, but hard and obstinate,
As is a rocke amidst the raging floods;
Gaynst which, a ship, of succour desolate,
Doth suffer wreck both of her selfe and goods.
That ship, that tree, and that same beast, am I,
Whom ye doe wreck, doe ruine, and destroy.

LVIL

Sweet warriour! when shall I have peace with you?
High time it is this warre now ended were;
Which I no lenger can endure to sue,
Ne your incessant battry more to beare:
So weake my powres, so sore my wounds, appear,
That wonder is how I should live a iot,
Seeing my hart through-launced every where
With thousand arrowes, which your eies have shot:
Yet shoot ye sharply still, and spare me not,
But glory thinke to make these cruel stoures.¹
Ye cruell one! what glory can be got,
In slaying him that would live gladly yours!
Make peace therefore, and graunt me timely grace,
That al my wounds will heale in little space.

Stoures, assaults.

LVIII.

By her that is most assured to her selfe.

Weake is th' assurance that weake flesh reposeth
In her own powre, and scorneth others ayde;
That soonest fals, when as she most supposeth
Her selfe assur'd, and is of nought affrayd.
All flesh is frayle, and all her strength unstayd,
Like a vaine bubble blowen up with ayre:
Devouring tyme and changeful chance have prayd,
Her glorious pride that none may it repayre.
Ne none so rich or wise, so strong or fayre,
But fayleth, trusting on his owne assurance:
And he, that standeth on the hyghest stayre,
Fals lowest: for on earth nought hath endurance.
Why then doe ye, proud fayre, misdeeme so farre,
That to your selfe ye most assured arre!

LIX.

Thrise happie she ! that is so well assured
Unto her selfe, and setled so in hart,
That neither will for better be allured,
Ne feard with worse to any chaunce to start;
But, like a steddy ship, doth strongly part
The raging waves, and keepes her course aright;
Ne ought for tempest doth from it depart,
Ne ought for fayrer weathers false delight.
Such selfe-assurance need not feare the spight
Of grudging foes, ne favour seek of friends:
But, in the stay of her owne stedfast might,
Neither to one her selfe nor other bends.

Most happy she, that most assur'd doth rest;
But he most happy, who such one loves best.

LX.

They, that in course of heavenly spheares are skild,
To every planet point his sundry yeare:
In which her circles voyage is fulfild,
As Mars in threescore yeares doth run his spheare.
So, since the winged god his planet cleare
Began in me to move, one yeare is spent:
The which doth longer unto me appeare,
Then al those fourty which my life out-went.
Then by that count, which lovers books invent,
The spheare of Cupid fourty yeares containes:
Which I have wasted in long languishment,
That seem'd the longer for my greater paines.
But let my Loves fayre planet short her wayes,
This yeare ensuing, or else short my dayes.

LXI.

The glorious image of the Makers beautie,
My soverayne saynt, the idoll of my thought,
Dare not henceforth, above the bounds of dewtie,
T' accuse of pride, or rashly blame for ought.
For being, as she is, divinely wrought,
And of the brood of Angels heavenly born ;
And with the crew of blessed saynts upbrought,
Each of which did her with theyr guifts adorne ;
The bud of ioy, the blossome of the morne,
The beame of light, whom mortal eyes admyre ;
What reason is it then but she should scorne
Base things, that to her love too bold aspire !
Such heavenly formes ought rather worshipt be,
Then dare be lov'd by men of meane degree.

Vide REMARKS, p. 125.

LXII.

The weary yeare his race now having run,
The new begins his compast course anew :
With shew of morning mylde he hath begun,
Betokening peace and plenty to ensew.
So let us, which this chaunge of weather vew,
Chaunge eke our mynds, and former lives amend ;
The old yeares sinnes forepast let us eschew,
And fly the faults with which we did offend.
Then shall the new yeares ioy forth freshly send,
Into the glooming world, his gladsome ray :
And all these stormes, which now his beauty blend,¹
Shall turne to calmes, and tymely cleare away.
So, likewise, Love ! cheare you your heavy spright,
And chaunge old yeares annoy to new delight.

¹ Blend, blemish.

LXIII.

After long stormes and tempests sad assay,
Which hardly I endured heretofore,
In dread of death, and daungerous dismay,
With which my silly bark was tossed sore;
I doe at length descry the happy shore,
In which I hope ere long for to arryve:
Fayre soyle it seemes from far, and fraught with store
Of all that deare and daynty is alyve.
Most happy he! that can at last atchyve
The ioyous safety of so sweet a rest;
Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive
Remembrance of all paines which him opprest.
All paines are nothing in respect of this;
All sorrowes short that gaine eternall blisse.

Vide REMARKS, p. 120.

LXIV.

Comming to kisse her lyps, (such grace I found,)
Me seemd, I smelt a gardin of sweet flowres,
That dainty odours from them threw around,
For damzels fit to decke their lovers bowres.
Her lips did smell lyke unto gillyflowers ;
Her ruddy cheekes, like unto roses red ;
Her snowy browes, lyke budded bellamoures ;
Her lovely eyes, lyke pincks but newly spred ;
Her goodly bosome, lyke a strawberry bed ;
Her neck, lyke to a bounch of eulambynes ;
Her brest, lyke lillyes, ere their leaves be shed ;
Her nipples, lyke young blossomd jessemynes :
Such fragrant flowres doe give most odorous smell ;
But her sweet odour did them all excell.

Vide REMARKS, p. 120.

LXV.

The doubt which ye misdeeme, fayre Love, is vaine,
That fondly feare to lose your liberty ;
When, losing one, two liberties ye gayne,
And make him bond that bondage earst¹ did fly.
Sweet be the bands, the which true love doth tye
Without constrain, or dread of any ill :
The gentle birde feeles no captivity
Within her cage ; but sings, and feeds her fill.
There pride dare not approch, nor discord spill
The league twixt them, that loyal love hath bound :
But simple Truth, and mutual Good-will,
Seeks, with sweet peace, to salve each others wound :
There Fayth doth fearless dwell in brazen towre,
And spotlesse Pleasure builds her sacred bowre.

¹ *Earst*, before.

LXVI.

To all those happy blessings, which ye have
With plenteous hand by heaven upon you thrown;
This one disparagement they to you gave,
That ye your love lent to so meane a one.
Ye, whose high worths surpassing paragon
Could not on earth have found one fit for mate,
Ne but in heaven matchable to none,
Why did ye stoup unto so lowly state?
But ye thereby much greater glory gate,
Then had ye sorted with a Princes pere:
For, now your light doth more it selfe dilate,
And, in my darknesse, greater doth appeare.
Yet, since your light hath once enlumind me,
With my reflex yours shall encreased be.

LXVII.

Lyke as a huntsman after weary chace,
Seeing the game from him escapt away,
Sits downe to rest him in some shady place,
With panting hounds beguiled of their pray:
So, after long pursuit and vaine assay,
When I all weary had the chace forsooke,
The gentle deer returnd the selfe-same way,
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke:
There she, beholding me with mylder looke,
Sought not to fly, but fearlesse still did bide;
Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
And with her owne goodwill her fymely tyde.

Strange thing, me seemd, to see a beast so wyld,
So goodly wonne, with her owne will beguyld.

LXVIII.

Most glorious Lord of lyfe ! that, on this day,
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin ;
And, having harrowd¹ hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win :
This ioyous day, dear Lord, with ioy begin ;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest dy,
Being with thy deare blood clene washt from sin,
May live for ever in felicity !
And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love thee for the same againe ;
And for thy sake, that all lyke deare didst buy,
With love may one another entertayne !
So let us love, deare Love, lyke as we ought :
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

¹ *Harrowd*, subdued.

LXIX.

The famous warriours of the anticke world
Us'd trophees to erect in stately wize;
In which they would the records have enrold
Of theyr great deeds and valorous emprise.
What trophee then shall I most fit devize,
In which I may record the memory
Of my loves conquest, peerlesse beauties prise,
Adorn'd with honour, love, and chastity!
Even this verse, vowd to eternity,
Shall be thereof immortall moniment;
And tell her praise to all posterity,
That may admire such worlds rare wonderment;
The happy purchase of my glorious spoile,
Gotten at last with labour and long toyle.

LXX.

Fresh Spring, the herald of loves mighty king,
In whose cote-armour richly are displayd
All sorts of flowres, the which on earth do spring,
In goodly colours gloriously arrayd ;
Goe to my Love, where she is carelesse layd,
Yet in her winters bowre not well awake ;
Tell her the ioyous time wil not be staid,
Unlesse she doe him by the forelock take ;
Bid her therefore her selfe soone ready make,
To wayt on Love amongst his lovely crew,
Where every one, that misseth then her make,
Shall be by him amearst¹ with penance dew.

Make hast therefore, sweet Love, while it is prime ;
For none can call againe the passed time.

¹ *Amearst*, amerced, punished.

LXXI.

I ioy to see how, in your drawen work,
Your selfe unto the Bee ye doe compare;
And me unto the Spyder, that doth lurke
In close awayt, to catch her unaware:
Right so your selfe were caught in cunning snare
Of a deare foe, and thralled to his love;
In whose streight¹ bands ye now captived are
So firmly, that ye never may remove.
But as your worke is woven all about
With Woodbynd flowers and fragrant Eglantine;
So sweet your prison you in time shall prove,
With many deare delights bedecked fyne.
And all thensforth eternall peace shall see
Betweene the Spyder and the gentle Bee.

¹ *Streight*, strict.

LXXII.

Oft, when my spirit doth spred her bolder winges,
In mind to mount up to the purest sky ;
It down is weighd with thought of earthly things,
And clogd with burden of mortality ;
Where, when that soverayne beauty it doth spy,
Resembling heavens glory in her light,
Drawn with sweet pleasures bayt, it back doth fly,
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.
There my fraile fancy, fed with full delight,
Doth bathe in blisse, and mantleth most at ease ;
Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might
Her harts desire with most contentment please.
Hart need not wish none other happinesse,
But here on earth to have such hevens blisse.

LXXIII:

Being my self captyved here in care,
My hart, (whom none with servile bands can tye,
But the fayre tresses of your golden hayre,)
Breaking his prison, forth to you doth fly.
Like as a byrd, that in ones hand doth spy
Desired food, to it doth make his flight:
Even so my hart, that wont on your fayre eye
To feed his fill, flyes backe unto your sight.
Doe you him take, and in your bosome bright
Gently encage, that he may be your thrall:
Perhaps he there may learne, with rare delight,
To sing your name and prayses over all:
That it hereafter may you not repent,
Him lodging in your bosome to have lent.

LXXIV.

Most happy letters! fram'd by skilfull trade,
With which that happy name was first desynd,
The which three times thrise happy hath me made,
With guifts of body, fortune, and of mind.
The first my being to me gave by kind,
From Mothers womb deriv'd by dew descent:
The second is my sovereigne Queene most kind,
That honour and large richesse to me lent:
The third, my Love, my lives last ornament,
By whom my spirit out of dust was raysed:
To speake her prayse and glory excellent,
Of all alive most worthy to be praysed.
Ye three Elizabeths! for ever live,
That three such graces did unto me give.

LXXV.

One day I wrote her name upon the strand ;
But came the waves, and wāshed it away :
Agayne, I wrote it with a second hand ;
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.
Vayne man she sayd that doest in vaine assay
A mortall thing so to immortalize ;
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,
And eke my name bee wyped out lykewize.
Not so, quod I; let baser things devize
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame :
My verse your vertues rare shall éternize,
And in the hevens wryte your glorious name.
Where, when as death shall all the world subdew,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

LXXVI.

Fayre bosome ! fraught with vertues richest treure,
The neast¹ of love, the lodging of delight,
The bowre of blisse, the paradice of pleasure,
The sacred harbour of that hevenly spright ;
How was I ravisht with your lovely sight,
And my frayle thoughts too rashly led astray !
Whiles diving deepe through amorous insight,
On the sweet spoyle of beautie they did pray ;
And twixt her paps, (like early fruit in May,
Whose harvest seemd to hasten now apace,) They loosely did theyr wanton winges display,
And there to rest themselves did boldly place.
Sweet thoughts ! I envy your so happy rest,
Which oft I wisht, yet never was so blest.

Vide REMARKS, p. 119.

¹ *Neast,* nest.

LXXVII.

Was it a dreame, or did I see it playne ;
A goodly table of pure yvory,
All spred with juncats,¹ fit to entertaine
The greatest Prince with pompous roialty :
Mongst which, there in a silver dish did ly
Two golden apples of unvalewd² price ;
Far passing those which Hercules came by,
Or those which Atalanta did entice ;
Exceeding sweet, yet voyd of sinfull vice ;
That many sought, yet none could ever taste ;
Sweet fruit of pleasure, brought from Paradice
By Love himselfe, and in his garden plaste.

Her brest that table was, so richly spredd ;
My thoughts the guests, which would thereon have fedd.

Vide REMARKS, p. 48.

¹ *Juncats*, junkets, viands.

² *Unvalewd*, invaluable.

LXXVIII.

Lackyng my Love, I go from place to place,
Lyke a young fawne, that late hath lost the hynd ;
And seeke each where, where last I sawe her face,
Whose ymage yet I carry fresh in mynd.
I seeke the fields with her late footing synd ;
I seeke her bowre with her late presence deckt ;
Yet nor in field or bowre I can her fynd :
Yet field and bowre are full of her aspect :
But, when myne eyes I therunto direct,
They ydly back return to me agayne :
And, when I hope to see theyr truw obiéct,
I fynd my self but fed with fancies vayne.
Cease then, myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see ;
And let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee.

Vide REMARKS, p. 131.

LXXIX.

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it,
For that your selfe ye daily such doe see :
But the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit,
And vertuous mind, is much more praysd of me :
For all the rest, how ever fayre it be,
Shall turne to nought and lose that glorious hew ;
But onely that is permanent and free
From frayle corruption, that doth flesh ensew.¹
That is true beautie : that doth argue you
To be divine, and born of heavenly seed ;
Deriv'd from that fayre Spirit, from whom all true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed :
He only fayre, and what he fayre hath made ;
All other fayre, lyke flowres, untymely fade.

¹ *Ensew*, follow.

LXXX.

After so long a race as I have run
Through Faery land, which those six books compile,
Give leave to rest me being half foredonne,
And gather to my selfe new breath awhile.
Then, as a steed refreshed after toyle,
Out of my prison I will break anew,
And stoutly will that second work assoyle,¹
With strong endevour and attention dew.
Till then give leave to me, in pleasant mew²
To sport my Muse, and sing my Loves sweet praise ;
The contemplation of whose heavenly hew,
My spirit to an higher pitch will rayse.
But let her prayses yet be low and meane,
Fit for the handmayd of the Faery Queene.

¹ *Assoyle*, absolve, discharge.

² *Mew*, prison.

LXXXI.

Fayre is my Love, when her fayre golden haires
With the loose wynd ye waving chance to marke ;
Fayre, when the rose in her red cheekes appeares ;
Or in her eyes the fyre of love does sparke.
Fayre, when her brest, lyke a rich laden barke,
With pretious merchandize she forth doth lay ;
Fayre, when that cloud of prude, which oft doth dark
Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away.
But fayrest she, when so she doth display
The gate with pearles and rubyes richly dight ;
Throgh which her words so wise do make their way
To beare the message of her gentle spright.
The rest be works of Natures wonderment ;
But this the worke of harts astonishment.

Vide REMARKS, p. 125.

LXXXII.

Ioy of my life ! full oft for loving you
I blesse my lot, that was so lucky plac'd :
But then the more your owne mishap I rew,
That are so much by so meane love embased.
For, had the equall hevens so much you graced
In this as in the rest, ye mote invent
Some heavenly wit, whose verse could have enchased
Your glorious name in golden moniment.
But since ye deignd so goodly to relent
To me your thrall, in whom is little worth ;
That little, that I am, shall all be spent
In setting your immortal prayses forth :
Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
Shall lift you up unto a high degree.

LXXXIII.

Let not one sparke of filthy lustfull fyre
Breake out, that may her sacred peace molest ;
Ne one light glance of sensuall desyre
Attempt to work her gentle mindes unrest :
But pure affections bred in spotlesse brest,
And modest thoughts breathd from well-tempred spirits,
Goe visit her, in her chaste bowre of rest,
Accompanyde with ángelick delights.
There fill your selfe with those most ioyous sights,
The which my selfe could never yet attayne :
But speake no word to her of these sad plights,
Which her too constant stiffnesse doth constrainy.
Onely behold her rare perfection,
And blesse your fortunes fayre election.

Vide REMARKS, p. 120.

LXXXIV.

The world that cannot deeme of worthy things,
When I doe praise her, say I doe but flatter :
So does the cuckow, when the mavis sings,
Begin his witlesse note apace to clatter.
But they that skill not of so heavenly matter,
All that they know not, envy or admyre ;
Rather than envy, let them wonder at her,
But not to deeme of her desert aspyre.
Deepe, in the closet of my parts entyre,
Her worth is written with a golden quill,
That me with heavenly fury doth inspire,
And my glad mouth with her sweet prayses fill.
Which when as Fame in her shril trump shall thunder,
Let the world chuse to envy or to wonder.

Vide REMARKS, p. 110.

LXXXV.

Venemous tongue, tipt with vile adders sting,
Of that self kynd with which the furies fell
Their snaky heads doe combe, from which a spring
Of poysoned words and spightfull speeches well ;
Let all the plagues, and horrid paines, of hell
Upon thee fall for thine accursed hyre ;
That with false forged lyes, which thou didst tell,
In my true Love did stirre up coles of yre ;
The sparkes whereof let kindle thine own fyre,
And, catching hold on thine own wicked hed,
Consume thee quite, that didst with guile conspire
In my sweet peace such breaches to have bred !

Shame be thy meed, and mischiefe thy reward,
Due to thy selfe, that it for me prepar'd !

LXXXVI.

Since I did leave the presence of my Love,
Many long weary dayes I have outworne ;
And many nights, that slowly seemd to move
Theyr sad protract from evening untill morn.
For, when as day the heaven doth adorne,
I wish that night the noyous day would end :
And, when as night hath us of light forlorne,
I wish that day would shortly reascend.
Thus I the time with expectation spend,
And faine my grieve with chaunges to beguile,
That further seemes his terme still to extend,
And maketh every minute seem a myle.
So sorrowe still doth seem too long to last ;
But ioyous houres do fly away too fast.

LXXXVII.

Since I have lackt the comfort of that light,
The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray ;
I wander as in darknesse of the night,
Affrayd of every dangers least dismay.
Ne ought I see, though in the clearest day,
When others gaze upon theyr shadowes vayne,
But th' only image of that heavenly ray,
Whereof some glance doth in mine eie remayne.
Of which beholding the idæa playne,
Through contemplation of my purest part,
With light thereof I doe my self sustayne,
And thereon feed my love-affamisht hart.
 But, with such brightness whylest I fill my mind,
 I starve my body, and mine eyes doe blynd.

LXXXVIII.

Lyke as the culver,¹ on the bared bough,
Sits mourning for the absence of her mate;
And, in her songs, sends many a wishful vow
For his returne that seemes to linger late:
So I alone, now left disconsolate,
Mourne to my selfe the absence of my Love;
And, wandring here and there all desolate,
Seek with my playnts to match that mournful dove:
Ne ioy of ought, that under heaven doth hove,
Can comfort me, but her owne ioyous sight:
Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,
In her unspotted pleasauns to delight.

Dark is my day, whyles her fayre light I mis,
And dead my life that wants such lively blis.

Vide REMARKS, p. 130.

¹ *Culver*, dove.

